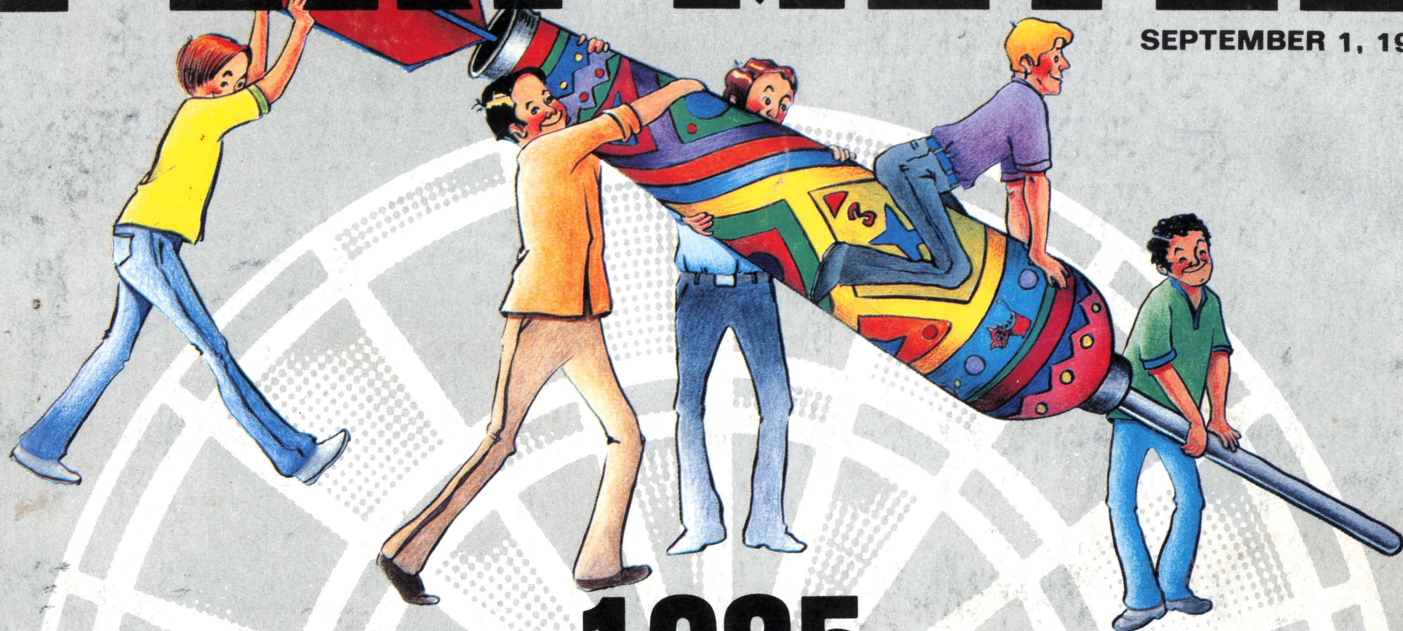


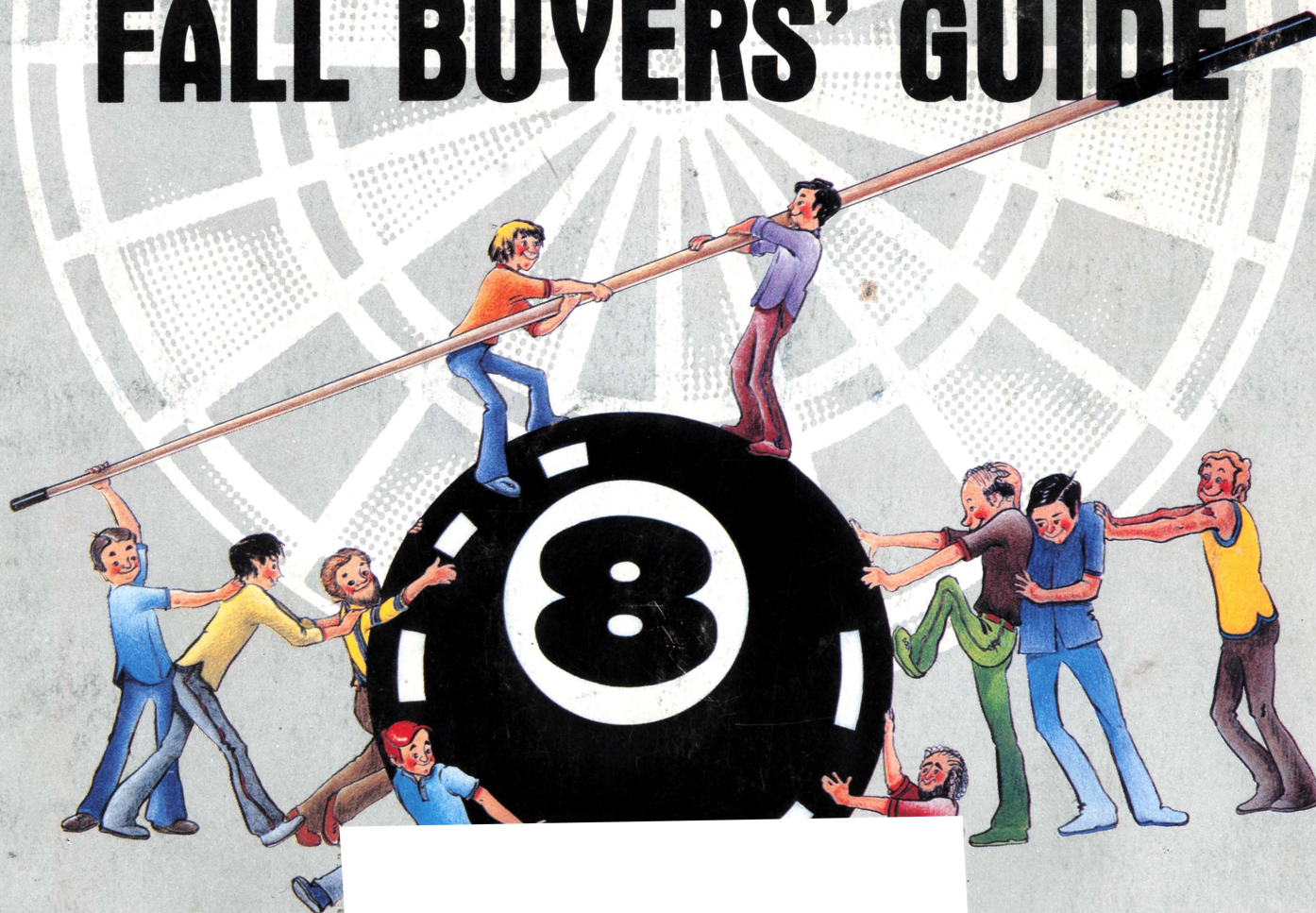
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CONTENTS/

Volume 11, Number 16/September 1, 1985

FEATURES

Operators Rave About Electronic Darts 20

Operators report that electronic darts are making good money in adult locations like bars, and the games increase in collections from week to week—as long as the operator promotes the game with league play.

Dart Factories Gearing Up for Big Push 27

While the other manufacturers are shrinking in size, electronic dart manufacturers are increasing their payrolls, expanding to larger quarters to keep up with the increasing demand for the hottest item in coin-op amusement today.

Pool—A Growing Replacement Market 34

Pool table manufacturers report pool table sales are up slightly, but it's nothing to support a back-to-the-basics trend in new equipment purchases for operators. The key, most table makers say, is operator promotions.

Fall Buyers' Guide 41

Table Games, Darts, Shuffle Alleys, and Bowlers—A pictorial and chronological breakdown of current equipment to stock your adult locations for the fall.

DEPARTMENTS

8 Up Front
9 Letters to the Editor
10 News

30 The National Play Meter
54 Classified Advertising

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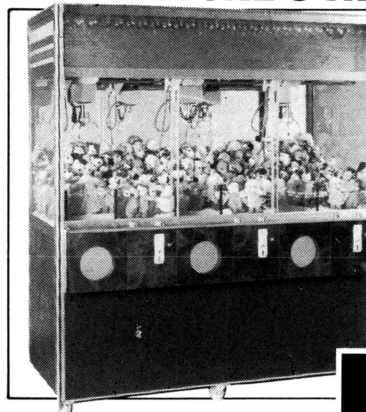
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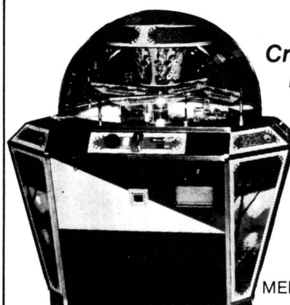
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The sun's in my eyes and other operator excuses

There was a ping-pong player once who wasn't very good at the game, but somehow he had this image of himself as being the Bjorn Borg of ping-pong if all the elements were just right.

But the elements were never right, and every point he lost, he would cite a reason that he missed.

"The table's crooked."

"The sun's in my eyes."

"The ball is cracked."

And he'd lose game after game—21-15, 21-14, 21-17, 21-9, 21-19.

And every time, it was the same thing—"The table's crooked." "The sun's in my eyes." "The ball is cracked."

Conditions are never going to be ideal for anything. Did you know that when Babe Ruth called his shot and hit the home run in the World Series game, there was a 15-mile-per-hour wind blowing in?

Did you know that when Secretariat won the Belmont Stakes, setting a new track record, he was running in less than ideal conditions?

And did you know that any number of baseball, basketball, and football stars had their greatest performances when battling the flu or leprosy or both?

The point is that the operator is in a perfect position to make excuses for less than stellar collections week after week. After all—

The players have deserted the gamerooms.

The manufacturers are turning out boring games.

There's nothing new under the sun.

But, like the crooked table and the cracked ball, these are merely excuses operators are using to sabotage themselves.

In this issue, we investigate two equipment types—the pool table and the electronic dart game. In both cases, these equipment types are as good or as bad as an operator makes them. Pool tables can be the curse of an operation with the location buying its own table and kicking you out of the stop. And dart games will make money for just a couple of weeks before dying on location.

But, for the operator who isn't afraid to make money the old-fashioned way, these two equipment

types can be reversed and made into the coin-op's money cow of the mid-1980's. They must be promoted, not just operated.

The alibis are there for the operator who is looking for excuses why he can't accomplish anything. But, for the enterprising operator who hasn't forgotten why he got in this business in the first place, pool tables and electronic darts offer a world of opportunity.

The operators who have devoted the time and energy to instituting league play in their locations are in better financial shape today than those who are waiting around for the next hit video game.

For the league operator, he's found that pool tables and dart games offer a steady cash flow and secure locations and, what's more, new locations.

It all has to do with one's perspective. Pool tables and electronic darts can be the curse or the savior for today's operator. It depends entirely upon the operator.

For the operator who is more interested in finding excuses, than in making money, here's a start:

The players have deserted the gamerooms.

The manufacturers are turning out boring games.

And there's nothing new under the sun.

But don't stop there! you can also add:

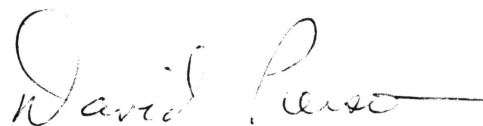
The table's crooked.

The sun's in your eyes.

And the ball's cracked.

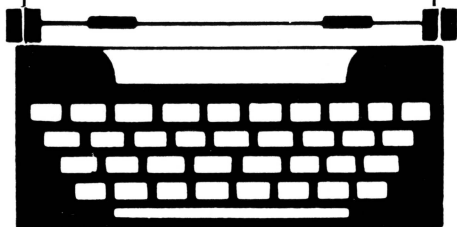
So don't wait for those ideal conditions. You can bail yourself out only by your own efforts.

There was never a more foolish death than the man who died of thirst in the desert. He never realized that the cacti that surrounded him in that desert held for him all the water he needed to drink.



David Pierson
Editor

Letters to the editor...



That's entertainment

Play Meter has been running blurbs proclaiming "We are in the Entertainment Business." I think we should thank *Play Meter* for reminding us. And for those of us who are unaware of this fact, please note it.

For too long, the industry has seemed headed for self-destruction by poor product, overpaid commissions, greedy and/or selfish manufacturers. We hear of secret agreements, and of operators alliances to communicate with the factories (who have not exactly listened so far).

Bravo also to *Play Meter* for continuing to print articles on *Increasing Grosses on Old Games*, *Computerized Management*, and *Game Trading*. We need more of this type of articles.

Let the industry beware. Manufacturers produce and operators operate. If equipment isn't entertaining, we all lose. We don't need an alliance. We need better, higher quality product and less fighting. The coin-op customers will do the rest.

Operators can make good money from older stock. We need more new ideas, while the manufacturers develop new product. And to those factories who still advocate kits are bad, I say that's not good enough. Factories have as much of an obligation to the industry to help operators keep older stock productive, as they do to produce new quality product. It's true for all manufacturers, not just game manufacturers. Standardized wiring and the like will do

much to improve the overall health of all of us.

As for communication, the factories could read the same trade publications we do, exhibit at all trade shows, and have mini-workshops at the distributorships. The communication lines worked well before. We need to get back to basics.

Let the names of those greats who have fallen, serve as a reminder to all of us.

That's entertainment...

Jeff Rosenthal
M&J Novelty
Brooklyn, New Jersey

should have ascertained its direction by polling its members. It's the members who must pay high royalty fees.

The royalty fees must be changed to a one time fee paid at the time of purchase. We operators also pay a royalty fee each and every time we purchase records for the jukebox.

Enough said.

J. William Corey
President
C.P.C. Music, Inc.
Crawfordsville, Indiana
o

Reasons he reads

I look forward to reading your magazine very much.

I've made about every effort to reduce my operating costs to survive as an operator. However, dropping my *Play Meter* subscription would be a bad mistake.

Here are a few good reasons that I like the magazine.

1. The survey of the most popular games.

2. The editorial is very informative and tells us about the character of the owner. (She says what's best for the business, and treats the manufacturers, distributors, and operators fairly.)

3. The distributors' ads, especially Faco West's advertisement on which machines give the best return on investment.

Even though I have a college degree in accounting, and have my own system on return on investment, Faco West's system I like even better than my own. Thank you Faco!!

Play Meter, keep up the good work.

Marlow Remmers
Lincoln, Nebraska

Sold down the river

We were completely shocked at the compromise agreement between the AMOA and the Performing Rights Societies. A careful analysis of the agreement sets forth the fact that we operators and members of the AMOA will receive a small 10 percent credit for a year or so.

As we all realize, part of the problem is in the enforcement of the fees. As I understand, only 30 to 40 percent of the jukeboxes are registered. They will never be registered unless someone searches all areas and forces the operators to register all boxes.

It was our understanding that AMOA was striving for a registration fee (one time) to be paid by the operator at the time of purchasing the jukebox from his distributor. This would save the high cost of enforcing the registration. Nothing has been mentioned about this possibility. What happened?

We definitely think the membership was sold down the river. AMOA wasted their time and effort. AMOA



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NEWS

OMAA protests AMOA agreement

The Ohio Music and Amusement Association (OMAA) adopted a resolution at its June 27 board of directors meeting protesting the May agreement between AMOA and the Performing Rights Societies on jukebox license fees. In a strongly worded statement, OMAA stated that "AMOA did not discharge its duties according to directives and goals it initially publicized and that the agreement is not in the best long term interest of the jukebox industry."

The AMOA agreement was the solution to an ongoing problem of excessive license fees imposed upon jukebox operators beginning with \$8 per year in 1978 rising to \$50 in 1985.

Jukebox operators were outraged at the increase and had sought relief with the AMOA agreement. However, the agreement fell short of providing much relief, and in fact calls for an increase to at least \$60 in 1987. The agreement provides a \$10 rebate for 1985 and 1986, and a rebate of anything over \$60 for 1987 and 1988 provided there are 110,000 jukeboxes registered in 1987 and 115,000 in 1988.

Ohio operators are angry about the agreement and how it was obtained. Said OMAA president Larry Van Brackel, "This agreement was the best kept secret since the atom bomb. AMOA made no attempt to let us know what was going on. There could even be more things in the agreement that we still don't know about. Even the point about low compliance among operators has not been challenged. I believe the compliance is much higher."

He went on to say, "The AMOA approached the OMAA to organize a grass roots organization, to have our members work hard contacting senators and representatives to make them aware of our problem. We were

asked to do it and we did. We worked hard, and all of a sudden we find out an agreement was reached and we didn't know anything about it."

This resolution, noted Van Brackel, is not the opinion of one or two people in the association, but represents the whole association. "At our board meeting it was 100 percent unanimous that everyone was extremely unhappy with this agreement," said Van Brackel. "A group representing the AMOA came to Columbus to talk with us about our feelings on the matter which we told them in detail. However, they didn't give us any satisfactory answers."

OMAA's resolution states its objections to the AMOA agreement: (1) AMOA's original goal was to mount a

grass roots campaign, not to negotiate an agreement that prohibits any further legislative effort before 1989; (2) the settlement establishes a new floor to fees that only two years ago were considered so oppressive as to cripple the already staggering jukebox industry; and (3) the settlement seems to be the result of the Performing Rights Societies perception of lack of unity on the part of AMOA negotiators.

Van Brackel said that the hope of OMAA, by adopting this resolution, is to emphasize to AMOA that they are representing operators all over the country and they need the grass roots campaigns and operator support. "Something as monumental as this agreement should have involved



Dyal receives award

John Dyal, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, right, was given an award by Standard Change-Makers, Inc. for the "Greatest Percentage of Increase in Sales for 1984." The award was presented by John S. Dugan, national sales manager, at the Company's 30th annual sales meeting in Indianapolis.

those affected. It should not have been a secret agreement, one which is unsatisfactory to operators," Van Brackel said.

Van Brackel pointed out that OMAA had been asked to support the original proposal of a \$50 one time fee on new jukeboxes and a one time fee of \$25 for used ones. The association had garnered support for this proposal and "now we have egg on our face," said Van Brackel, commenting on the agreement being made with no advance notice. "Those we contacted for support of a proposition are not likely to be as willing to listen to us in the future," he said.

Van Brackel summed it up, "Our biggest goal is making AMOA aware that if legislative negotiations are scheduled again, we want to be involved, not ignored."

Nintendo wins against King Kong claim

Nintendo of America, Redmond, Washington, has won a counterclaim against Universal Studios, Inc. Universal had originally filed a trademark infringement action seeking over \$100 million dollars, claiming that Nintendo had infringed on Universal's rights to King Kong by introducing the popular game *Donkey Kong* in 1982. Universal demanded that Nintendo cease all production of *Donkey Kong* and give Universal all profits. Universal also threatened various Nintendo licensees with litigation.

One of the licensees was Coleco, who had the license for the home version of *Donkey Kong*. Coleco, due to other business matters involving Universal and unable to take the risk of litigation, settled with Universal, subsequently paying Universal over \$5 million in royalties from the sale of home video cartridges of *Donkey Kong*.

Nintendo, according to general counsel Howard Lincoln, was outraged at the threats. "We felt they (Universal) were trying to extract money from Nintendo and we were determined to fight it to the end."

Nintendo had requested a summary judgment (a judge studies the evidence and makes a ruling without going to a trial) and it was granted by Judge Robert Sweet of the United States District Court in New York, who dismissed Universal's claims. He also found that Universal had no rights to King Kong. A federal court of appeals

affirmed Judge Sweet's dismissal of the claim.

Nintendo then filed the counterclaim for tortious interference with its licensees, unjust enrichment, vicarious copyright infringement, punitive damages, and attorney fees. In his opinion issued at the July 29 trial, Judge Sweet found that Universal had commenced the litigation against Nintendo in bad faith and had falsely asserted rights in King Kong which it knew it never had. He also found that in its zeal to cash in on the success of *Donkey Kong*, Universal had infringed on Nintendo's *Donkey Kong* copyright and had wantonly interfered with Nintendo's *Donkey Kong* licensing program by threatening licensees with spurious litigation. Nintendo was awarded attorney fees, actual and punitive damages against Universal. The award is in excess of one million dollars.

The judge noted in his award of attorney's fees when the complaint of this action was filed, Universal knew that the allegations of the sweeping ownership of King Kong were unsupported by the rights Universal actually possessed. Universal used the lawsuit as part of a larger effort to acquire some portion of the profits derived from...*Donkey Kong*. Universal and (Universal's president and chief operating officer Sidney Jay) Sheinberg, viewed corporate litigation as a "profit center," and the known insufficiency of the claims asserted did not inhibit the use of litigation where the opportunity for profitable settlement existed."

The judges comments came from Sheinberg's boast to Nintendo prior to litigation, as he attempted to force a settlement, that Universal's litigation department was a profit center and that Nintendo had better start saving money for attorney fees.

In commenting on the victory, Lincoln noted, "It is a nice victory. It is a case of a small company standing up to a big company and winning. It's a situation where you truly feel that justice has been done."

Coleco has filed a suit against Universal to recover the \$5 million it has paid Universal.

Kramer focuses on locations

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THE CALENDAR

September 20-21

Michigan Coin Machine Operators Association Annual Convention, Flint Hyatt Regency, Flint, Michigan. Contact Walter Maner, 517/372-2323.

To be announced

West Virginia Music & Vending Association (exhibits (25 booths), contact Leoma Ballard, 304/949-3289

Possibly 2nd week in October

Amusement & Music Operators of Virginia General Membership Meeting, John Marshall Hotel, Richmond, Virginia. Contact Louis Corso, 804/359-2030.

October 12

Washington Amusement & Music Operators Association General Meeting/Election of Officers. Contact Yvonne Kline, 509/457-5891.

October 31-November 2

AMOA 1985 International Exposition of Games and Music, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. Contact AMOA, 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60601. Telephone 312/644-6610.

To be announced

Amusement & Music Operators Association of New Jersey Annual Dinner Dance/Installation of Officers. Contact James Cuccio or Michael Redpath, 201/929-1667

To be announced (November)

Music & Amusement Association, Inc. (NY) Annual Meeting & Election of Officers. Contact Ronald Koppelman, 212/245-7550

International Shows

October 2-3

JAMMA 23rd Annual Amusement Machine Show, Tokyo Ryutsu Center, 1-1, Heiwajima 6-chome, Ota-ku, Tokyo 143, Japan. Organizers: Japan Amusement Machinery Manufacturers' Association, Room 704, Nagata-Cho TBR Bldg., 2-10-2, Nagata-Cho, Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo 100, Japan. Telephone 593-2563/4.

October 10-13

ENADA, Congress Building, Rome; Contact, SAPAR, Via di Villa Patrizi, 10-Cap 00161, Rome. Telephone 84.41.505.

October 29-30

A.L. Preview, Novotel, Hammersmith, London. Contact Howard and Wikberg Associates, 27 Elizabeth Mews, London NW3. Telephone 01-722 5173

concept for its new *LA Trivia* game. The company's trivia game is under license from the Anheuser-Busch company, maker of the new low alcohol beer, LA beer. The Anheuser-Busch company will have its 50,000 man sales force promoting Kramer's *LA Trivia* along with its LA beer.

Coin-operated amusement machine manufacturers rarely focus on the locations to promote products. Distributors are the target of manufacturer hype, who in turn are delegated the responsibility of promoting the products to operators who will sell locations on the games.

Kramer has bypassed the normal promotion channels to focus on stimulating locations, although the *LA Trivia* game will only be sold through normal distribution channels. Said David Katz, Kramer's vice president of sales and marketing, "We are not trying to sell direct to locations. We are only creating the demand for the game at the location level. Then the location must contact its local operator or us for referral."

Katz continued, "In this industry it's always been difficult to reach operators. They don't all attend trade shows or even read trade magazines. So we felt that we should go directly to locations to create a demand for a product."

When asked if operators would object to Kramer creating a demand for a certain product, Katz said, "This may be a kick the operators need. We are doing the same thing operators do, creating location demand, and I believe ambitious operators will welcome the unique opportunity."

Bill Kraft, an operator and distributor in Oregon agreed, "Kramer is giving us operators one less thing to worry about, selling a location on a game. They are doing the work and we can benefit from the program. Going to the locations is certainly helping operators. I must get five calls a day from people wanting information on the game."

Katz said that the program is a great opportunity for aggressive operators to work with locations. "There are many advantages to working with a nationally known company like Anheuser-Busch. There are opportunities for operators to hold trivia contests to stimulate excitement in the game."

Said Kraft, "Holding trivia tournaments may wind up as national competition."

Kramer is also concentrating on

new programs for *LA Trivia*. The company has contracted with the New American Library, a large publishing company of trivia questions. •

B&W announces incentive program

Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp. of Louisville, Kentucky, announced a vending program which provides additional bonuses for vending machine operators.

According to Irv Otte, B&W director of vending, a key feature of the new vending contract is an annual bonus which provides a base payment plus \$3 per machine for combinations of Kool King and either Kool Mild Kings or Kool 100's; payment plus \$8 per machine for three-brand combinations of Kool King, Kool Mild Kings, and Kool 100's; and an additional \$7 payment per machine for a fourth B&W brand.

In addition, each new Kool 100's or Kool Mild Kings placement added to a cigarette machine on location earns an \$8.50 one-time bonus.

New placements of one style of Coins, B&W's new discount cigarette distributed solely through the vending trade, earns a \$2 bonus. A \$6 bonus is earned for placement of both Coins Filter Kings and Coins Filter Lights, if three B&W brand styles are already in the machine.

Said Otte, "We hope this program will provide the incentive for expanded vending distribution of Kool and provide additional support to the launch of Coins, introduced in January 1985 with a suggested selling price 25 cents less than popular priced cigarettes."

For more information, contact Irv Otte, Brown & Williams, 1500 Brown & Williamson Tower, P.O. Box 35090, Louisville, Kentucky 40232. Telephone 502/568-7419. •

California association joins VOCAL

The California Coin Machine Association (CCMA) has joined the Skill Game Operators Association in pledging support of the Video Operators Children's Alert Line (VOCAL).

VOCAL was begun in 1983 by the operators in Oregon and Washington to assist police agencies in locating

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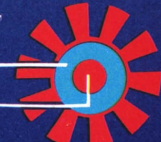
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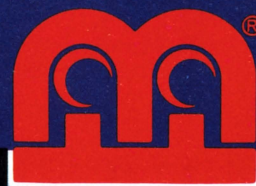
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missing children.

In January 1985, VOCAL merged its program with the Hide and Seek Foundation, Inc., a national non-profit organization that searches for missing children. They hope to expand the VOCAL Program to all fifty states by soliciting the help of amusement operators nationally. This program is endorsed by the AMOA.

In one week in March, Hide and Seek found six children through its networking efforts.

Posters showing the pictures and descriptions of two missing children (from all parts of the United States) are distributed monthly to members for distribution in their locations as well as to other businesses with whom they deal.

VOCAL stickers are being issued and members of CCMA are requested to place them on amusement machines in positions easily visible to young children. Emergency help phone numbers on the VOCAL stickers reflect 24-hour telephone hot lines.

VOCAL can be reached c/o Hide and Seek Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 14574, Portland, Oregon 97214. •

AMOA moves offices, staff retained

AMOA has retained Smith, Bucklin & Associates, Inc., a large trade association management firm for management services, and moved its headquarters to 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60601; telephone 312/644-6610.

Three AMOA employees, J.D. Meacham, director of communications and research; Ellen Donovan, exhibits coordinator; and Julie Komat, assistant to the director of communications, have accepted positions with Smith, Bucklin as AMOA staff specialists. •

NAMA vending profits show improvement

Net profits for American vending companies edged upward to 1.8 percent in 1984 from 1.5 percent in 1983 (a 20 percent advance), while return on assets showed a considerable 44 percent gain from 9 percent in 1983 to 13 percent in 1984.

This data, from the 1984 Operating Ratio Report of the National Auto-

matic Merchandising Association (NAMA), was announced this week by G. Richard Schreiber, president.

"The hefty increase in return on assets was indeed welcome news," said Schreiber, "but the low sales-to-net income ratio is still well under what this industry should be achieving, and indeed, far under what this study showed for the previous 10 years (well over three percent of sales)."

The NAMA Operating Ratio Report is compiled from profit data submitted to Price Waterhouse & Co. by NAMA member firms. The current report represents total sales volume of \$1,850,663,000 from 146 participating companies, Schreiber said.

He pointed out that net profits for the smallest companies averaged 6.7 percent of gross sales and were generally higher for companies with total sales under \$10 million.

On the average, commissions remained steady at 7.2 percent of sales and the rate was lower for the smaller reporting firms.

Total operating expenses declined to 53.3 percent of sales from 54.4 percent in 1983 and total payroll expenses were down to 25.1 percent of sales from 26.1 percent. •

Rand purchases electronics firm

Rand of Phoenix, Inc., a manufacturer in the privately-owned pay telephone industry, has acquired Hi-Rel Electronics, a national electronic assembly company. Hi-Rel will function as an independent division, providing Rand with circuit board assembly for its pay telephones and other products, and will accept outside contracts. Hi-Rel will move to Rand's recently purchased 110,000 square-foot, five-acre manufacturing facility.

Founder and president of Rand of Phoenix, Neil Rand, reports, "Recent expansions were necessary because of tremendous demand for the Rand of Phoenix *Tele-Rand* pay telephone. Hi-Rel will contribute to production volume and efficiency. •

Arachnid announces two positions

Arachnid, Inc., Rockford, Illinois, manufacturer of *English Mark Darts*,

Now one low price for any size tokens up to 1".

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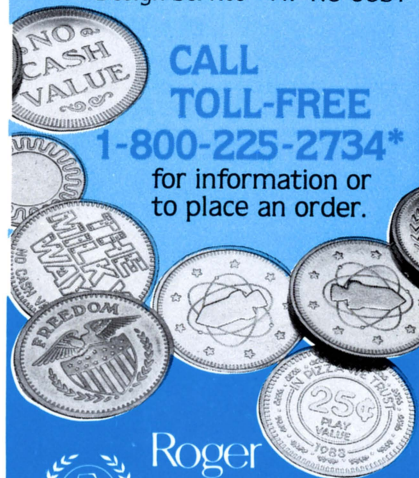
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Sam Zammuto



David Michalski

has announced two new positions in its corporate management.

Sam Zammuto has been promoted to the new position of vice president of marketing. Zammuto has been with Arachnid for several years, formerly holding positions of manufacturing vice president and assistant to the president.

"Our new marketing department has exciting promotion plans that will boost collections for operators of *English Mark Darts*," Says Zammuto, "We already have a strong program with the EMDIA (English Mark Darts International Association) and the BullShooter Magazine, and we intend to build on that program with local, regional, and national promotions."

Appointed to the position of manufacturing vice president is David Michalski, formerly Arachnid's vice president of the injection molding division. David has over 20 years of management experience, and will oversee production of the Series 5000 *Elite English Mark Darts* game and Arachnid's new *English Mark Darts 4500 Econo*.

Exidy goes to Court to settle dispute

Exidy, Inc., Sunnyvale, California, went to court over its landlord's refusal to let Exidy sublease part of its facilities, which forced Exidy to file for Chapter 11 under the bankruptcy laws several months ago.

According to Pete Kauffman, Exidy's president, Exidy has a lease differential on the building lease, which means that Exidy has low long term lease payments but it has the right to sublease the building at a higher price.

Exidy had secured a loan of over a million dollars from its bank on the predication of subleasing the building. With a tenant secured, Exidy needed the landlord's signature to finalize the loan. However, the landlord refused to sign. According to Kauffman, "He wouldn't sign because he figured he would rather put the lease money in his pocket than see Exidy get it. It's outright theft and it's taking the courts to straighten the matter out."

Kauffman noted that Exidy opted to file Chapter 11 to move the case from state court to a federal court. "We believe it is more advantageous for us to have this case tried in a federal court," Kauffman told *Play Meter*.

Kauffman also stressed that the company is "business as usual." He said that Exidy has maintained its R & D staff and they are working on a fourth shooting game, a follow up to the successful *Crossbow*, *Cheyenne*,

and *Combat*. It will be previewed at the AMOA show in Chicago in October. Kauffman also told *Play Meter* that Exidy has every intention of paying creditors as soon as the case is settled, which he said should be from three months to a year.

Bally Corp. announces restructuring

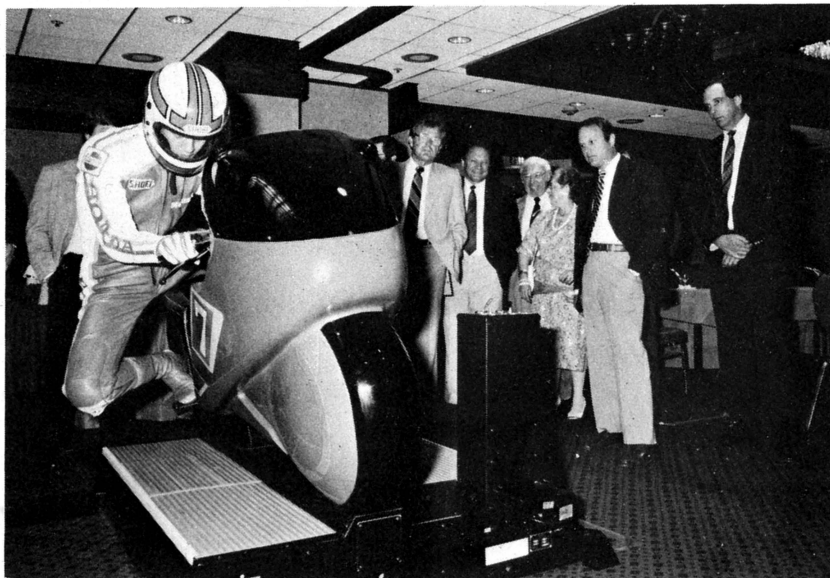
In a memo from chief operating officer of Bally Corporation, Roger Keesee, it was announced that Bally is creating a coin operations division to be headed by Maurice Ferchen, current president of Bally Midway. The division would encompass Bally Midway, Bally Distributing and Bally's *Aladdin's Castle*. All three will report to corporate through the newly formed division. Ferchen took over the presidency of Bally Midway from Dave Marotske after having been at the helm of the Bally *Aladdin's Castle* division. Bob Fliday, who came to Bally from Montgomery Ward as did Ferchen, will report to Ferchen on Bally's *Aladdin's Castle* and Bally Distributing, which currently has eleven offices.

Chuck Farmer and Mike Rudowicz, former president and vice president of marketing respectively of Bally Distributing were let go. Rudowicz told *Play Meter* that it came as a surprise to him when the restructuring was announced. Rudowicz had no plans to announce but did say that he hoped to stay in the coin operated industry. Chuck Farmer could not be reached for comment.

Kaminkow and Mitchel join Game Plan

Joe Kaminkow, project manager on the development of Williams' *Space Shuttle*, and Constantino Mitchel, Kaminkow's partner, have joined *Game Plan* on a consulting basis. "Artistically Mitchel and I comprise a great team," Kaminkow said. Mitchel, who's art work adorned games like *Phoenix*, *Gorgar*, *Flash*, and *Fire Power*, is looking forward to creating another industry classic.

"You just can't place components in a shoe box, shake 'em up and hope to have a new game," Kaminkow continued. "Designing a hit in today's market requires innovation, hard work, a strong theme, and careful



Distributors were treated to a preview of Sega's new game *Hang-On* at Sega's new headquarters in California.

study of market trends to capture player interest. The project we have been designing for Game Plan meets all the above criteria for success."

Kaminkow, though not disclosing the name of the game, said it should be ready for release around the AMOA show.

Mitchel commented, "You won't be disappointed!"

Deith Leisure appointed exclusive agent

Unidesa of Spain has appointed Deith Leisure as its exclusive agent in the United Kingdom and plans to open an office to support Deith Leisure sales with technical back-up and to study the United Kingdom market.

Unidesa is a large manufacturing and operating company in Spain employing over 2,000 people.

Unidesa export manager E. Olivera said, "We intend to make a significant contribution to the United Kingdom and we have been very encouraged by the response at both the A.T.E. and Blackpool Shows."

Montgomery Vending appoints two

Montgomery Vending, Providence, Rhode Island, has promoted Gus Paglis and appointed Linda Desimone to new positions.

Paglis has been promoted to the position of sales manager. Paglis has been with Montgomery several months and is credited by Montgomery with increased sales. Paglis has been in sales for 20 years, and has been owner and operator of several small businesses during his career.

Desimone has been appointed to the position of office manager and advertising executive. Prior to joining the firm, Desimone was office manager and executive secretary for several Rhode Island companies, and owned a restaurant and other small businesses.

ShowBiz offers staff incentive plan

ShowBiz Pizza Time, Inc. at the behest of company chairman Robert L. Brock has begun offering rank-and-file employees the opportunity to



ShowBiz Pizza Time, Inc. chairman Robert L. Brock presents a check for \$10,000 to Laura Maryland of Montgomery, Alabama. The first grand prize winner in the company's Employee Performance Incentive Awards Program. With them are ShowBiz president Richard Frank and mascots Billy Bob and Chuck E. Cheese.

share in \$90,000 in cash awards every quarter, including an individual Grand Prize of \$10,000 for a winning attitude.

Brock is in the process of rebuilding the ShowBiz Pizza Place and recently acquired Chuck E. Cheese Pizza Time Theater chains. "If the company is going to rebound, we have to regain the confidence and enthusiasm of our customers," Brock said. "We have to renew our commitment to providing the best customer service possible. And to do that, we have to reach our employees."

"So many incentive programs simply toss the ball into the managers' court," he continued. "Our incentive program goes right to the hourly employees, the kids making pizza and cleaning tables. It tells them how important their individual efforts are in revitalizing ShowBiz and Chuck E. Cheese."

Prospective participants must be certified by the general managers of their restaurants, based on punctuality, attitude, job skills, and rapport with the customer. Once certified, he then must take a comprehensive written test covering various aspects of the restaurants' operation. After achieving a satisfactory score on this quiz, the employee may register for the next quarterly drawing, in which winners are chosen at random.

The first Grand Prize winner in the program is Laura Maryland of Montgomery, Alabama.

Brian Schulte of St. Peters, Missouri, and Lisa Daniels of Arvada, Colorado, had each won \$5,000 cash prizes. The

three top winners were flown to Dallas, Texas, to receive their awards from ShowBiz Pizza Time chairman Robert L. Brock, in a special ceremony at company headquarters.

Air Depot moves to new facility

Air Depot, Inc. announces a recent move to its new manufacturing facility located at 1501 West Campus Drive, Unit L, Littleton, Colorado 80120; telephone 303/ 795-2146.

This new location will provide increased office, manufacturing, and warehouse space to accommodate increased sales.

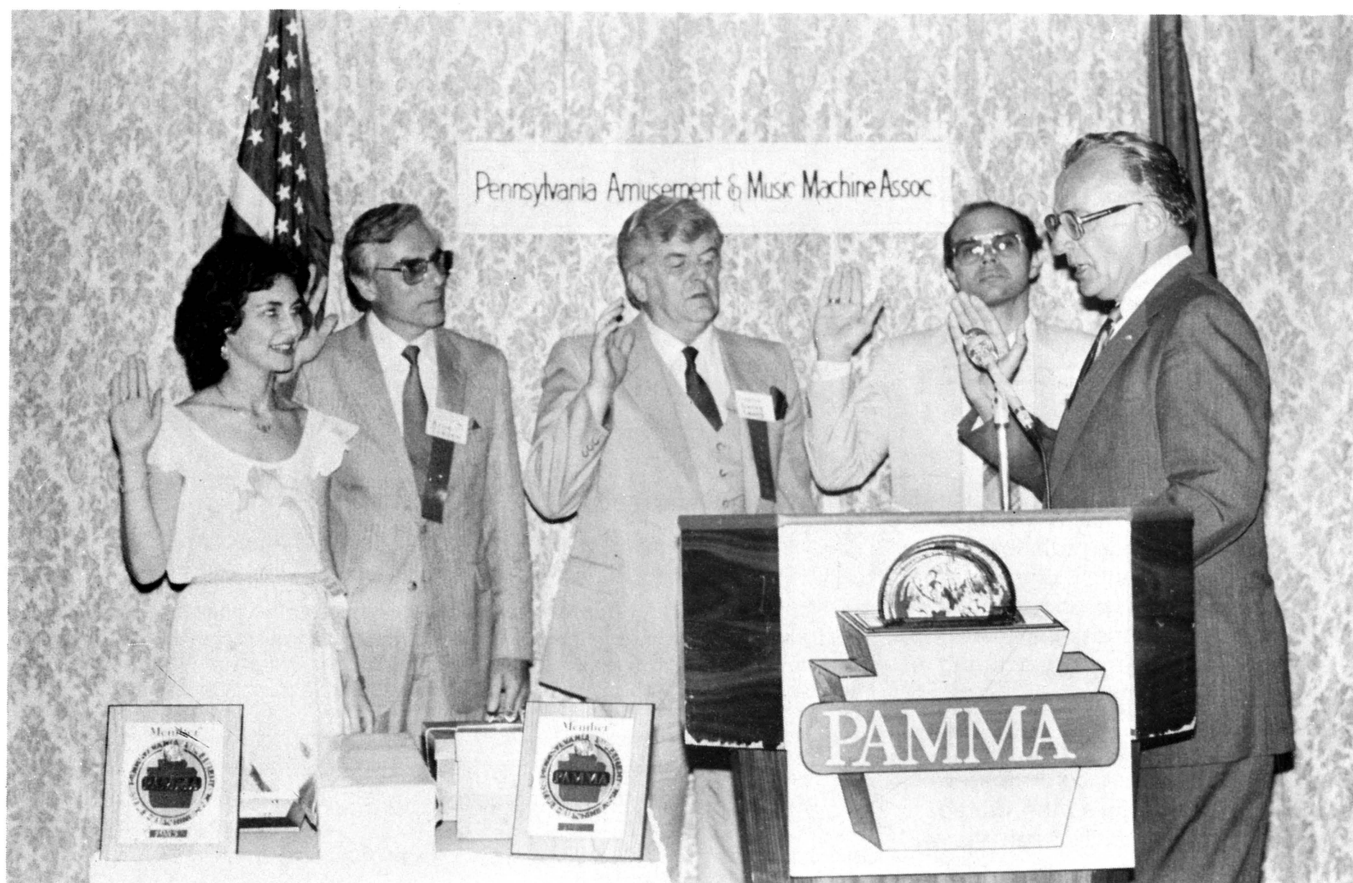
Since 1982, Air Depot has manufactured a complete line of self-contained tire inflators, offering free pushbutton models, as well as coin-operated units.

Nationwide promotes two

Nationwide Vending Services, Inc., a vending management organization located in Southern California, announced the promotion of two of its executives.

Daniel D. Brown has been appointed executive vice president. Brown was previously Nationwide's vice president of operations.

Frederick ("FJ") Pollak has been promoted to vice president of operations from director of operations.



PAMMA holds convention



Clockwise from bottom left: Mr. & Mrs. Al Rodstein (Bally Banner) with Bernie Powers (Bally Sente); Paul Corey (Ohio Music and Amusement Association) installs PAMMA's new officers; Philip Roth (Roth Novelty) talks with customer; Jack Morris (right) shows customer the new UBI pool table; Dave Gilfor (left, Active Amusements) shakes hands with Nintendo's Joe Gilbert.

The Pennsylvania Amusement and Music Machine Association (PAMMA) held its annual convention in Valley Forge on July 13-14, hosting over 300 people, representing over 100 operations.

Having a trade show during the height of summer may seem daring to those who have accepted the summer doldrums and believe no one really does any business during that time. Sharon Harris, the convention chairman, agreed that there were times she had flashes of uncertainty. "Some have accepted the summer lull but I say that's bull. We didn't accept it, and we had a successful show because we worked, worked hard," exclaimed Harris. "The same goes for businesses. If people would get back to hard work, they may see that summer is not what many have just accepted it to be."

Exhibitors, some of whom were skeptical, raved that it was definitely worth the expense. Said Harris, "Several distributors told me that the good will and future business they will see because of the show made it worth the trip."



Harris summed up the general feelings of operators, "The overall feeling was that if you didn't see equipment you liked, learn something, or talk to someone interesting, it was your own fault. There were informative seminars, manufacturers representatives, and new equipment exhibited."

John Margold of Bally Banner said, "The attitude of operators was more positive than I expected. You never know when you've hit bottom until you're on your way back up. And I finally think operators are on their way back up."

Attendees participated in an auction whose proceeds went to the Political Action Committee (PAC) fund. Harris noted that over \$23,000 was raised by the auction. Equipment was donated by Arachnid, Atari, Atlas Distributing, Bally, Bally Sente, Cinematronics, Data East, Dynamo, D&L Distributing, IDEA, M. Kramer, Magic, Merit, Monroe, M&P, Nintendo, Premier, Pub Time Darts, Rick Rochetti, Rock-Ola, Romstar, Roth, SMS, Status, UBI, and Williams.

Exhibitors included Active Amusements, Bally/Banner, Capitol Telephone Systems, Cinematronics, Eastern, Electro-Sport, Greyhound, Frank Guerrini Vending, M. Kramer, Merit, Mobile records, Monroe, Nintendo, OMA, Romstar, Roth, SMS, Status, and UBI.

Merit Industries, who has had tremendous success with its *Trivia Whiz*, introduced *Bull Buster Darts*, its new electronic dart game. Cinematronics introduced *Power Play*, a soccer-themed game for the Cinemat System.

A seminar called "The Great Manufacturers Seminar," included a panel of manufacturers to answer questions from the audience. Said Harris, "It gave operators a real opportunity to ask questions and get truthful answers." Members of the panel included Bernie Powers, Bally Sente; Ken Anderson, Cinematronics; Ben Har-El, Konami; Bill Cravens, Nintendo; Arnie Aarstad, Bally; Gil Pollock, Premier; and Joe Dillion, Williams.

New officers elected were chairman of the board, Russ Warner; president, Phil Eisenberg; first vice president, Del Guerrini; second vice president, Larry Leary; treasurer, Arne Taksen; and secretary, Sharon Harris. Harris will also be the convention chairman for next year's show, planned for Valley Forge again. ●



Indians knew a thing or two about promotions. They'd postpone a rain dance just as soon as it started to rain. And that sort of makes sense. After all, there's really no percentage in having an Indian whooping it up around the totem pole in the middle of a thunderstorm.

In the same way, operators aren't fools. They knew promotions didn't make much sense during the boom days. They knew no matter how much or how little they beat the drums, the quarters would rain down all the same on top of their videos. So why bother?

But that was way back in those golden days of yesteryear. Today, things are different. Nowadays an operator had better whoop it up because it won't come down unless he does. And electronic darts is the coin-op game operators have found benefits most from promotions.

Operators rave about electronic darts

By David Pierson

Electronic darts—which a few years ago seemed innocuous and maybe even impractical to the operator—have become the biggest item in the coin-op amusement industry.

This past year many operators, looking for a non-video alternative, have rallied around the electronic dart game with good results and now are claiming darts are making them good money.

No, this isn't some manufacturer's hype to sell product. This is what operators are saying. Electronic darts are generating outstanding collections, they say. Dart games have a long, long life, they say, something like pool tables and jukeboxes. What's more, they insist, the collections on the game improve from week to week because the game goes faster as the players get better.

Okay, so what's the catch?

Simply this. The electronic dart game will die on location in a very few weeks unless you promote it. The electronic dart game is not like a video game that you can put out on location and expect it to make money for you. It has to be worked, especially with league play. It's a very time-consuming, labor-intensive effort—starting up dart leagues. But it pays dividends for the operator who is willing to devote the time and energy to it.

Kirk McKennon, who recently started a promotion company called Custom Events International in Bloomington, Minnesota, assists the dart game maker, IDEA, with its operator-run promotions. McKennon told *Play Meter*, "Today, operators can't just put out games and hope they'll make money. The operator of tomorrow is going to have to be able to deliver customers to his locations."

Has to be able to deliver customers to his locations—it's an interesting concept. And dart league operators insist they have been able to accom-

plish that and, at the same time, generate some solid collections with their electronic dart games.



Dart games in league locations earn \$150-\$175 a week—steadily.

Don Waldron of Northgate Amusement in Springfield, Illinois, has been involved with dart leagues for only slightly over a year. But, he told *Play Meter*, an operator can make good money from running dart leagues.

He said his dart games earn \$150 to \$175 a week during the winter league season and \$85 to \$90 during the slower summer season. "And it hasn't drained our other pieces of equipment," he said. "In fact, jukebox

play in the dart locations has registered a 20 to 30 percent increase."

He added, "With a longevity that's comparable to pool, the ROI on darts is phenomenal."

Another operator, Rick Celenza of King's Row in Orlando, Florida, said leagues are the backbone of his dart operations.

He said his dart games average about \$160 a week during league play and that he fully expects the games to be earning \$400 a week within a year because league play creates a snowball effect.

"I could talk about it until I'm blue in the face," said Celeza. "It's simple. It's ridiculously simple. If anything, it'll pick up the revenue of the other machines."

"League play," he continued, "turns darts into a monster."

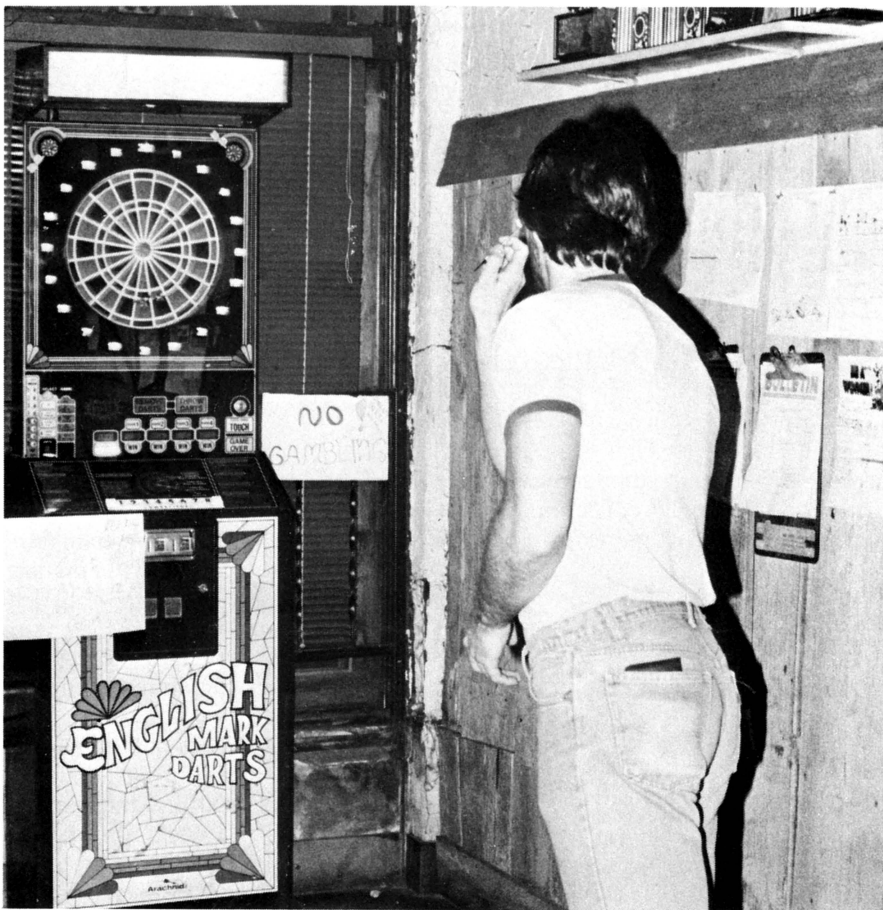
John Spears of Winnebago Coin in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, said he's been running dart leagues for six years and now has over 120 teams. "If it weren't for the leagues," Spears said, "darts would be played very little." He said that his dart game revenue slips 60 percent during the summer when he has no leagues running.

J.L. Reagan of B&S Music in Rome, Georgia, said they got into dart leagues in January. "I think they're beautiful," he said. "It's one of the best things for the bars. Instead of working against them, we're working with them on this."

Reagan said the dart leagues have actually helped collections on the other pieces of equipment in his dart league locations, picking up pool and jukebox collections by about 40 percent.

And he added, "We didn't know a thing in the world about running dart leagues, but we're working them now. And we're all enthused about what it's doing for us."

But, again, for the electronic darts



Putting out dart games without league play is fruitless, most operators say.



With league play, electronic darts "turn into a monster."

to work, the operator has to promote them through league play.

Mark Blum of United Distributors in Wichita, Kansas, didn't get involved in dart leagues until very recently; but he had had an earlier experience with electronic darts. "I put out five dart games without promotions and got nothing," he told *Play Meter*. Now, with league play, he said the games are "on a long-term basis, your next pool table."

McKennon offered a similar insight into dart games without promotions. As a distributor with Hanson Distributing, McKennon said, "We used to call darts the boomerang game. If we sold them to operators who would put them out without any kind of promotion," he said, "in a few months those games would come right back to us again."

"It got to the point," McKennon said, "where we wouldn't sell dart games to operators unless they promised to run leagues with them."

Waldron also attested to the need for league promotions if an operator is going to operate electronic darts. He pointed out that darts did well in his non-league locations in the metropolitan Springfield, Illinois, area simply because there are so many dart leagues in that city that even non-league dart games enjoy the increase in revenue. But, said Waldron, outside the metropolitan area, dart games in non-league locations generate 80 percent less money.

In every case, operators told *Play Meter* that, unlike video games which earn less as players get better at the game, electronic darts earn more money because the games go faster. And league play, encouraging the competition, creates such a snowball effect that, according to Celenza, "the better the players get, the faster it sucks in quarters."

Operators also insisted that improved collections with dart games is only one of two reasons they got involved in league play promotions. The other reason, every single operator said, was that league play solidified their relationships with their locations.

This leads back to McKennon's remark that the operator of tomorrow is going to have to be able to deliver customers to his locations. A number of operators told *Play Meter* that the bar business in their area was suffering and attributed that in a large part to stiffer drunk driving laws in the states.

And dart league play, operators insist, is pumping business back into



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the bars. According to Waldron, league play is accounting for between a \$40 and \$100 increase in business per night; and that is something that solidifies an operator's relationship with his locations.

Orlando operator Celenza told *Play Meter* he picks his bars' worst nights and schedules his league games for those nights. That way, said Celenza, the bar will have 16-20 people guaranteed to be there on the slowest nights of the week. Celenza also said the nature of operator-sponsored league play is such that those customers return a second night during the week to see the results of the past week's games and the current standings. So Celenza has his routemen post the league standings in the league bars when they make their regular collection runs, thus helping out the bars even more.

"I own these people," Celenza said of his locations. "They bow down to me when I go in there," he said, speaking figuratively. "They were dying on the limb, and the dart leagues helped them get that business they needed."

He went on to say, today, the bars would throw another operator out in the street if he even tried to take away

my locations," said Celenza.

Spears went so far as to say that a beer distributor told him there was a 30 percent drop in beer sales in his area during a two-week layoff between dart league seasons last year and that the beer distributor attributed that drop directly to the lull in dart activity.

Waldron told *Play Meter* dart leagues were able to attract new customers into the bars. He said people are quitting bowling leagues and joining his dart leagues instead.

The cost to a player to compete in a dart league, Waldron pointed out, was substantially less than what it costs that player to compete in a bowling league. And these dart players, he continued, are, by and large, new customers who are not pool players. So it means more money for the operator as well.

This ability to generate additional business for the locations has also helped dart league operators attract new locations to their routes.

Mike Kelly, who runs Waldron's leagues, explained. "The locations get pressure to get into our leagues, and that pressure is coming from their own patrons." Kelly said this is significant, in their case, they are competing against other operators who also run

dart leagues. "But we're seeing where the players are asking their locations to join our leagues instead. Players specify our dart league."

Celenza also reported he's getting numerous calls from new locations which want to join his league. "I'm averaging at least three calls from new locations each week," he said.

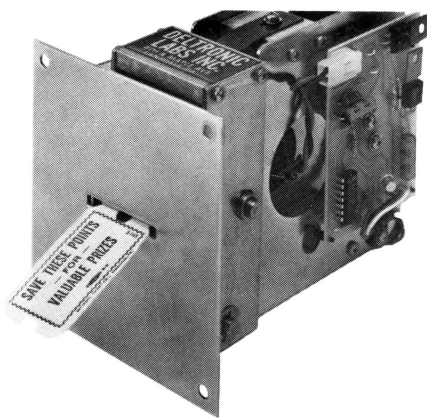
Said Blum, "I find that, after you get the first ones out, the locations start calling. We're getting calls where they want us in. So we're gaining equipment locations as a result of this. And the locations we're getting we're placing in more than just the dart games.

Spears agreed. "It's helped as far as gaining locations for us. But, more importantly, it's helped us keep locations. And that's the biggest thing."

The biggest problem with running dart leagues, operators contend, is the work itself. Running dart leagues isn't really that expensive but it is extremely time-consuming.

Said Waldron, "Leagues are extremely labor intensive. It's hard to justify the expense unless you do a lot of darts. It takes hours of your time, setting up meetings with locations and players, handling correspondence, and so on. The first year is, quite

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frankly, hell. And anyone who is going
to get involved in a half-hearted way
might as well not get involved because
it does require a lot of work.

"We're so intent on running dart
leagues correctly," Waldron told *Play
Meter*, "That we're actually contracting
with other operators to run their dart
leagues. One of our primary concerns
is that a lot of people went into dart
leagues ill-prepared, and that put a
sour taste in a lot of people's mouths
concerning dart leagues."

According to Celenza, "In the
beginning, putting the league together
is very difficult work. But once it
starts, it almost runs itself automati-
cally."

Spears agreed. "You've got to
work at it," he said. "The organiza-
tional part of setting up a league is the
hardest part; but, after that, it's easy."

Blum said he found that, if you're
going to run a dart league, you have to
saturate an area. "With a few out," he
told *Play Meter*, "it doesn't help the
operator. But, if the operator satu-
rates an area, it helps create interest in
the product." This saturation, he
insisted, is essential with running
darts. The games must be close to one
another because the stiffer D.U.I. laws
deter players from wanting to get
involved in a league where they have
to travel long distances.

Blum went on to say that, because
of the small amount of space darts
take up in a location, it is easier to
create this saturation effect than with
pool tables, which require a location to
dedicate a significant amount of floor
space for the game. The result, said
Blum, is that it is easier to set up dart
leagues where the location teams are
in very close proximity to each other.

Each operator seems to have a
different philosophy about how to
spur interest in his dart leagues. Kelly
of Northgate Amusement said he
works with the players, trying to talk
up the leagues with them and listening
to their suggestions on how to make
the leagues enjoy more player appeal.

Celenza, on the other hand, said
he relies strictly on his locations to
promote interest at the player level.
Celenza said that his locations are
hungry enough for business that
they'll do a lot of the legwork for him,
beating the bushes for players to
represent the bar's team.

Dart leagues allow operators to
make what adjustments they feel they
must make to keep player interest
high. Operators are not committed to
running the leagues in one set format.

In fact, Waldron said he spent a lot

of time researching and formulating
his own dart league strategy. He said
he analyzed all the different league
programs the factories were pro-
moting, and he pieced together parts
from each of them when formulating
his own.

The result is he's now devised a
league program that has over 600
players and probably will exceed 1,000
by this fall. He's had to move into
larger quarters to accommodate the
extra workload the league has placed
on his company, and now he's running
leagues for other operators and, by his
own estimate, accounts for about 80
percent of leagues run in the area.

One of the touches Waldron has
incorporated into his dart league
format is shorter seasons. He runs his
leagues for only 12-14 weeks, as
opposed to the longer seasons which
can run as long as 26 weeks.

The main reason for the shorter
seasons, Waldron said, is that it allows
new locations to get involved in league
play quicker.

Nothing is more frustrating for a
location, he said than having to wait
three months for the beginning of the
next season. Waits like that, he said,
can take away a lot of the enthusiasm
and inertia the location has been able
to build up among its customers.

Also, by staggering his seasons,
instead of having all his seasons start-
ing at the same time, Waldron said
he's been able to abbreviate the maxi-
mum delay to six weeks between a
location agreeing to sponsor a team
and that team actually taking part in
league competition.

Waldron also said players are
more willing to commit to shorter
spans of time, rather than to commit
to a league whose season runs for 20-
plus weeks.

Celenza uses a playoff system
where league champions represent
four different divisions—North, South,
East, and West. As a championship
team advances further in the playoffs,
he said, the cash incentives get
greater. "With that kind of incentive,"
Celenza said, "my games are getting
pounded to death."

He said he requires a location to
have at least three teams before it can
warrant placement of two dart
machines. "Now all my original league
locations have at least two machines
in them."

Celenza also said he's devised a
masters' classification system where-
by the top dart shooters in his league
must advance to play against stiffer
competition. This makes room for the

(Continued on page 58)

Dart factories gearing up for big push in 1986

By David Pierson

While manufacturers of other coin-op equipment types are reporting sales are down or have flattened out, electronic dart manufacturers are reporting brisk sales activity.

The increased orders for coin-op darts, they say, has forced them to expand their present operations and add new employees. It's reminiscent of the video game boom when manufacturers couldn't keep up with the demand.

In 1981, dart manufacturer Arachnid of Rockford, Illinois, had a total of just 15 employees. Today, the company employs well over 100, and the company has gone into periods of producing 70-80 games a day.

Nomac of Algonquin, Illinois, has increased the number of employees in its plant by 300 percent in one year's time.

IDEA of Sycamore, Illinois, has experienced similar growth pains and is presently moving into a new 22,000 square-foot production facility which will allow the company to triple its production if the demand is there for the product.

And Merit Industries of Bensalem, Pennsylvania, is a newcomer to the field and will have the capacity to turn out as many, if not more, dart games as the other three.

"We started seeing people take an interest in electronic darts at AOE '82," said Arachnid's Marcio Bonilla. "And it's been growing ever since. We haven't scratched the surface; and, still, at one time, in the early spring last year, we were 2,000 games behind production.

"We're looking at a very strong season," the Arachnid spokesman continued. "For ten years we've planted a lot of seeds; and now, finally, operators know that no one has lost money on darts. So the word's getting out about them."

"The market's very strong,"

agreed Fred Kelly of Nomac. "We see 1986 as the year of electronic darts. You'll see this market getting terrific inside the next year."

"Gosh!" said Don DeVale, president of IDEA, "We haven't even begun to tap our capacity."

And IDEA's Paul Calamari added, "We're not even close to saturation."

Peter Feuer of newcomer Merit shared the same picture of the market. Distributors are waiting with their tongues hanging out," he said. "There's no question about the popularity of the product. There's tremendous room for growth. Most states haven't even been touched yet."

Although all four electronic dart companies report growing interest and sales for electronic darts, all four agree coin-op darts has hardly overwhelmed the industry as video games did a few years ago. Most agree the market is only about ten percent filled, and that means a lot of operators still haven't gotten involved in the hottest game since the demise of videos.

If anything is stopping dart games from achieving their overnight saturation, it's that it's not a lazy man's game. For the game to survive on location, operators must promote it through leagues and tournaments, and that's hard but profitable work.

Electronic darts almost require league play to survive; but, if an operator invests the time organizing the leagues, the game becomes a solid revenue producer, generating more money from week to week.

All four manufacturers realize this. While they insist that their individual products incorporate the best available technology in the industry today, all four dart makers will tell you the electronic dart game cannot survive on location without the operator becoming involved in the promotion end of the game.

"In truth," said IDEA's DeVale, "all

we've really done is added a scoring service for the players. We didn't invent the game of darts. It's been around for a long time.

"All the operator has to do is interest the player in using this scoring service, and the most popular method of accomplishing that is by setting up leagues," he continued.

DeVale continued, "This is a game that takes perspiration on the part of the operator. Those who put them out, thinking of them as video games, were disappointed. There's been an apathy among many operators because of that. Many operators tried darts the wrong way. The product has to be promoted and worked. But, once an operator does it, the rewards are fantastic and continuous.

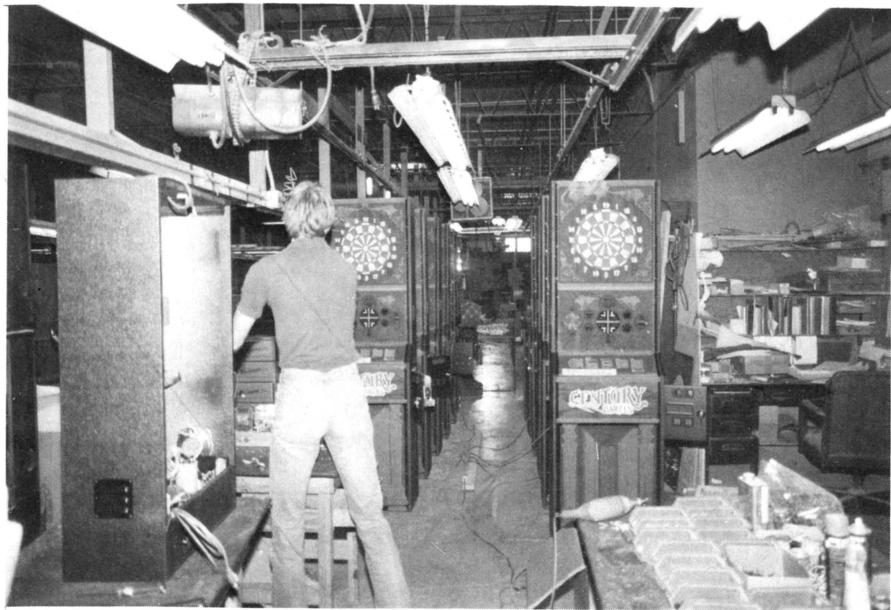
"It's a rarity," he added, "in that collections increase with time. If the operator devotes the energy to it, the ROI is fantastic."

And the other dart manufacturers echoed the same sentiments, sometimes almost in the same words.

Said Arachnid's Bonilla, "Operators can't think they can run a dart game like a video. It's a different animal, and operators get scared. But once they find out how easy it is, they change very fast."

Feuer of Merit said, "The vast untapped areas are left to the diligent operator. The areas that were tried and failed, failed because it wasn't promoted right. Darts isn't a game you plug in. It takes a year to work at it and get it going. The longevity of the game is good, and it's a pure skill game."

"For the operator to be successful in the coin-op business today," said Nomac's Kelly, "he must promote. If the bar owner and the operator don't promote, there's a good chance their business will fail because of the stiffer (Driving Under Influence) D.U.I. laws. With leagues, bars can get around the problem by having one team member



Dart factories are reporting increased production...



...increased employee staffing...



...all to keep up with the demand for electronic dart games.

designated as the driver."

Because of this unanimous opinion among the dart manufacturers that it's more hoopla than the game itself which makes electronic darts a profitable investment for today's operator—all four dart makers are actively involved trying to educate operators on the intricacies of running dart leagues.

"We feel it's the only way the operator can understand what he's getting into," said Arachnid's Bonilla. "It's a game he won't have to rotate from bar to bar if he does it right."

For its part, Arachnid entertains operators who attend the company's Rockford, Illinois, plant for instructions on running electronic dart leagues. Arachnid goes so far as to pay half the operator's transportation costs, with the distributor picking up the other half; and Arachnid picks up the tab for all the operator's expenses once he reaches Arachnid.

While there in Rockford, operators are given a tour of dart league locations and educated in Arachnid's philosophy on how to run a dart league.

"The market's still growing," said Bonilla. "There are some areas that are still totally unknown. That's why we're lining up operators here. We line up to three trips a week for operators to become acquainted with dart leagues, to see how they work."

"Somebody must teach the operator what to do with the game," Bonilla continued. "And we're doing that. Our distributors also have been a great help to us by inviting their customers to come with them to Rockford."

IDEA's DeVale said, "If an operator is even mildly interested, we'll come on the scene and see to it he's successful and work with his distributor at no charge to the operator."

Actually, IDEA has contracted with Custom Events International of Bloomington, Minnesota, to help operators of IDEA dart games set up leagues and tournaments.

Said Kirk McKennon of Custom Events, "Our job is to teach people our concept. Obviously, we can't go to every location. But we work with IDEA, talking to the operators about how to run a successful league program."

"We provide the materials and back-up for doing just that. We work through the factory, at their direction, with the distributor. And then we work through the distributor, at their direction, with the operator. And, if

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NATIONAL PLAY METER

Poll Information

The following are rankings of the top games in the coin-operated amusement industry. The games are ranked according to an index formulated from a regular survey of operators of coin-operated amusement equipment. Games not appearing on this poll either (1) did not generate a five percent response or (2) did not rank among the top 50 games in the country. The games are further identified by their general equipment classification type: Video, Pinball, and Novelty. The average index rating for all surveyed games for this individual survey was 76.

Top Ten Games of September 1 Issue

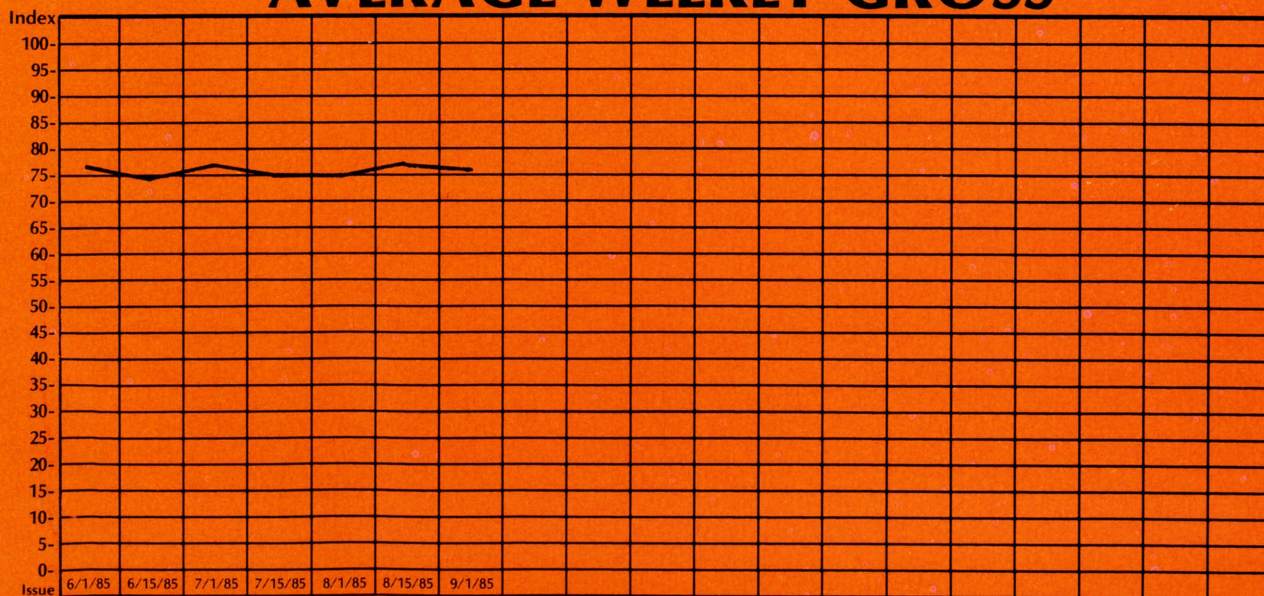
Game/Manufacturer	Index Rating	Game/Manufacturer	Index Rating
1. Paperboy/Atari	234	6. Magmax/Nichibutsu	133
2. Pac-Land/Bally Midway	187	7. Cheyenne/Exidy	130
3. Commando/Data East	155	7. Trivia Whiz/Merit	130
4. Duck Hunt/Bally Midway	140	9. Kung Fu Master/Data East	125
5. Spy Hunter/Bally Midway	136	9. Yie Ar Kung Fu/Konami	125

Game/Manufacturer	Sept. 1	Aug. 15	Aug. 1	July 15	Video	Pinball	Novelty
1. Paperboy/Atari	234	183	—	—	•		
2. Pac-Land/Bally Midway	187	—	—	—	•		
3. Commando/Data East	155	197	271	231	•		
4. Duck Hunt/Nintendo	140	133	116	229	•		
5. Spy Hunter/Bally Midway	136	116	105	102	•		
6. Magmax/Nichibutsu	133	—	—	—	•		
7. Cheyenne/Exidy	130	109	88	130	•		
7. Trivia Whiz/Merit	130	149	158	148	•		
9. Kung Fu Master/Data East	125	140	131	156	•		
9. Yie Ar Kung Fu/Konami	125	117	112	113	•		
11. Sharpshooter II/Game Plan	120	51	63	82		•	
12. Hogan's Alley/Nintendo	117	143	154	195	•		
13. 1942/Williams	114	93	114	115	•		
14. Astron Belt/Bally Midway	110	—	49	45	•		
14. Star Rider/Williams	110	69	73	51	•		
16. Hat Trick/Bally Sente	107	92	115	71	•		
17. Karate Champ/Data East	104	114	126	117	•		
18. Special Forces/Magic	102	—	—	—	•		
19. VS. Excitebike/Nintendo	100	89	110	96	•		
20. Crossbow/Exidy	98	83	80	105	•		
21. Samurai/Magic	96	90	136	—	•		
22. Chicago Cubs Triple Play/Premier	92	67	—	96		•	
23. M.A.C.H. 3/Mylistar	89	61	60	57	•		
24. Firefox/Atari	87	—	55	58	•		
24. Major Havoc/Atari	87	53	59	63	•		
24. Cobra Command/Data East	87	104	135	123	•		
24. Space Shuttle/Williams	87	116	117	113		•	
24. Sorcerer/Williams	87	106	127	117		•	

NATIONAL PLAY METER

Game/Manufacturer	Sept. 1	Aug. 15	Aug. 1	July 15	Video	Pinball	Novelty
29. Black Pyramid/Bally Midway	86	73	46	60		•	
30. Punch-Out!!/Nintendo	85	96	87	75	•		
31. Pole Position II/Atari	84	95	87	82	•		
32. Q*bert's Qubes/Mylstar	83	37	40	35	•		
32. Kixx/ICE	83	—	—	—			•
34. Bomb Jack/Tehkan	78	65	64	80	•		
35. Video Trivia/Greyhound	77	99	101	89	•		
36. Champion Baseball/Wico	76	58	49	62	•		
36. Kings of Steel/Bally Midway	76	61	40	43		•	
38. Pole Position/Atari	75	85	84	81	•		
39. Marble Madness/Atari	74	97	83	95	•		
40. Trivial Pursuit/Bally Sente	73	—	98	—	•		
40. VS. Baseball/Nintendo	73	67	105	64	•		
42. Crown's Golf/KitKorp	72	87	164	80	•		
43. Discs of Tron/Bally Midway	71	39	51	45	•		
44. Dragon's Lair/Cinematronics	70	53	49	52	•		
45. Two Tigers/Bally Midway	68	74	97	87	•		
45. Triple Strike/Williams	68	—	48	69			•
47. Galaga 3/Bally Midway	67	64	69	65	•		
47. Up and Down/Bally Midway	67	72	66	46	•		
47. Firepower II/Williams	67	74	66	67		•	
50. Elevator Action/Taito	65	55	57	60	•		

AVERAGE WEEKLY GROSS



NOTICE: The sole purpose of this survey is to determine on a regular basis the top performing games in the country. Any attempt to use the results of this survey for any other purpose is unauthorized, wrongful, and misleading.

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need be, we can work through the operator, at his direction, with the location."

For its part, Nomac sponsors a number of tournaments, including the most immediate one—a four state shootout with teams from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Indiana.

Also, as a way to introduce league play, Nomac offers to run a \$500 location tournament for operators. Most operators and manufacturers agree that an introductory tournament is the best way to familiarize players with the dart machine and the scoring system and stimulate player interest in competing.

"To familiarize players," said Nomac's Kelly, "you must have some form of competition before league play. We've found that 80 percent of the tournament teams go on to become league teams."

This heavy manufacturer push to familiarize operators with the proper method of running dart leagues is not just a good-will gesture on the part of four manufacturers. All four manufacturers recognize that, without viable operator leagues, demand for their electronic dart games will dry up very quickly.

"Operators who were afraid of getting into darts," said Kelly, "are getting into it as a result of our efforts. What we try to do is break down the operator's resistance to running these types of promotions. We train our operators so they can see it's really not that difficult."

Kelly went on to say that a well-promoted location could justify the placement of three electronic dart machines.

Merit Industries, which has only recently shipped out its first samples, also plans to become very involved in the league education program for

operators. Said Feuer, "We have a program in the works. We're new; so we haven't yet established an operator promotion, but give us time."

"The strongest areas for league play are right in the backyards of the other manufacturers," Feuer continued. "Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Nebraska were easy pickings. But, by us being here in the east, we can nurture this area."

"It takes a long time to catch on. It takes a year to get an area started rolling. Look how long it took Arachnid to get things going, but," he added, "the people who make coin-op their livelihood, the pros, they're going to get into it."

The ripest areas as far as dart leagues are the southeast and the east coast, which is still a haven for steel-tipped players. California, which appears most resistant to any kind of league competition, is also virtually untapped as far as operator-run dart leagues.

The states which have the strongest dart leagues running right now are Oregon, Washington, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Georgia, Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Maine, Idaho, and Utah.

Arachnid explained the geographical voids by stating, "We simply haven't worked those areas yet."

IDEA contends that greater inroads can be made by attracting the steel-tipped dart throwers. According to IDEA's Paul Calamari, the company is trying to tie in with the American Dart Organization. Along these lines, the company has made some changes on its game to attract these players. One of those changes is the bubble bullseye, that is, the bullseye within a bullseye which is common on cork dart boards.

The other change is the size of the target, which is somewhat smaller than the standard electronic dart board.

Feuer of Merit contends, however, that while attacking the steel-tipped market may be a feasible goal, he said, "Most operators are not interested in converting steel-tipped players. They want to go after the new players."

Actually, with the large untapped market out there, both strategies will probably meet with success.

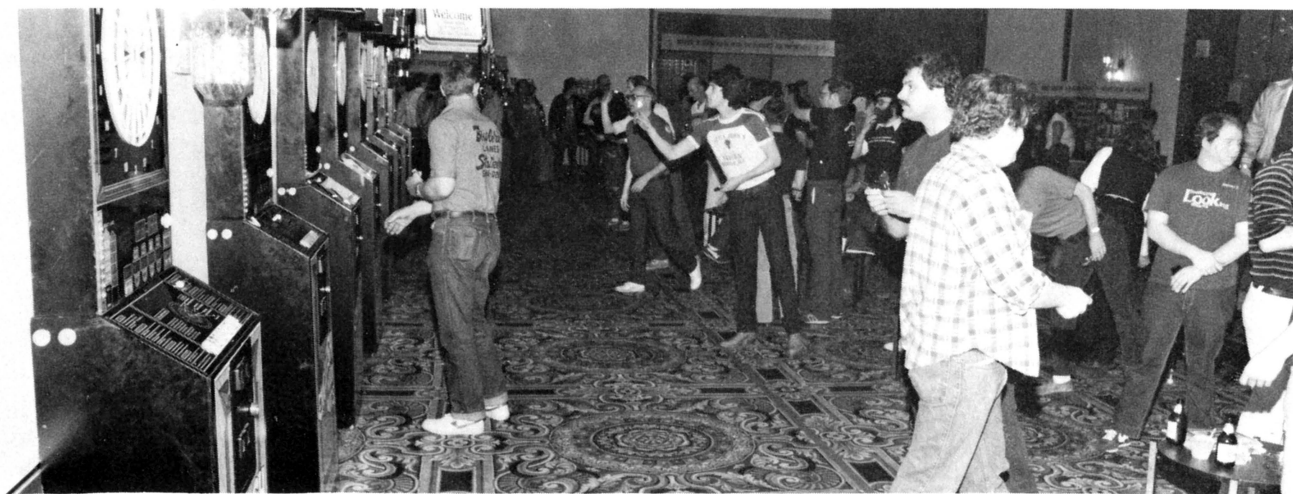
Already one company, Nomac, has announced plans for a national championship, in the spring of 1986. And Arachnid also plans to announce its national championship tournament in the near future. And, most probably, IDEA and Merit can be expected to sponsor national championships as well.

But the whole national tournament picture took an interesting twist in late July when, surprising, AMOA interviewed all four electronic dart companies about the possibility of establishing a national AMOA dart league championship.

Such an effort does not appear to have the support of all four manufacturers; so the prospects for four national dart championships is very likely.

Said McKennon of Custom Events, "The idea of having many different national championships is not bad, but we should make sure the events are bonded and that qualified people are running them."

McKennon said one of the national associations—either AMOA or NCMI—should take on the responsibility of sanctioning the events, perhaps insuring that the state and national tournaments are bonded so that the industry does not end up with another tournament fiasco. ●



For darts to be successful, operators must institute league play.

Pool—a growing replacement market

By David Pierson

Pool sales haven't supported the back-to-basics theory, but table makers see a slow, steady growth.

Leagues and tournaments are the key to operators regaining pool table locations.

Despite the rumored back-to-the-basics trend which theorizes that operators are reinvesting in new jukeboxes and pool tables and other industry staples instead of purchasing new video games—the pool table business is still a replacement market, according to the leading table manufacturers.

"There's been no tremendous pickup in sales," said Charles Milhem, president of The Valley Company in Bay City, Michigan.

"Our sales have been strong," said Mark Struhs, vice president at Dynamo Corp. in Grand Prairie, Texas. "However, that's not because the pool table market is growing. In fact, the industry appears to be shrinking. It's just that our market share has grown dramatically."

Pool is still a replacement market," said Jack Morris, president of U.B.I. of Union, New Jersey.

But manufacturers expect an upturn in 1986.

Milhem predicted an upturn in 1986, apparently based on recent sales activity.

The Valley president said his company's business was about even with last year's pace, but he said recent indications lead him to expect perhaps a ten percent growth for the future.

Milhem's optimism is rooted in a recent inexplicable increase in business. He said Valley registered its biggest sales month in two years in April. Strangely, he said, the increase could not be attributed to any company promotion but perhaps to a general upward trend in pool table sales.

That brisk sales activity continued in May, he said, slackening slightly but still producing satisfactory sales figures as late as June. In early July, Milhem said, sales on pool tables took their annual dip; but he reported that,

by August, sales were once again climbing.

Apparently, a big reason for the anticipated turn-around in the pool table market is centered on operator-run promotions. Pool leagues conducted by operators, Milhem said, help solidify an operator's locations and can even win back location-owned table spots.

Valley, the acknowledged leader in the pool table industry has a sizeable chunk of the total number of pool tables sold in the coin-op business. And, since 1979, the company has used its market position to expand the number of operator-owned tables by creating an operator-run league program. By running pool leagues, Valley insists, operators are able to maintain the pool tables in bar locations. Pool tables have, historically, been the piece of coin-op equipment most susceptible to location ownership.

Valley's all-out push for operator-run leagues is based on the premise that location-owned tables mean fewer pool table sales for manufacturers since bar owners tend to look on a pool table as a one-time investment rather than as a continuing commitment to the player which requires constant updating of equipment.

And Milhem said Valley's efforts to promote league play are finally generating results which will translate into higher table sales.

"We've had a tremendous amount of interest in our league program idea," Milhem told *Play Meter*. "Operators have told themselves they need league programs for the predictable income."

"With leagues," he continued, "operators know they can plan their cash flow months in advance. And that's something they can't do with some of the other equipment types."

Milhem cited the example of a

WE GOTCHA COVERED!



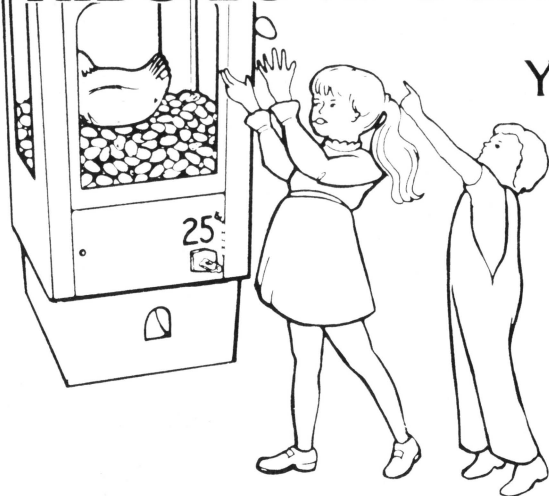
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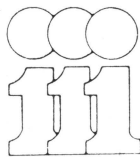
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large operator who directly attributed a \$7,000 a week drop in his revenue to a lull between the end and start-up of his pool league seasons.

Though Valley has been assisting a number of state associations in starting up statewide league programs, Milhem said there are a lot of operator-run leagues in the country which aren't even affiliated with any state association, and that, he said, is a promising indication of the future trend for pool.

"Everybody is saying the same thing," Milhem noted. "You can't just put a game or a pool table out on location and expect it to make money for you. You need to have a program, and we think the league concept can help tremendously there."

Cheryl McCown of Charlie's Recreation and Vending in Eugene, Oregon, said her state association has just recently decided to start a pool league which might even incorporate the state of Washington.

McCown said the stricter D.U.I. laws in Oregon have placed a hardship on taverns which are desperately in need of any kind of promotion which can help stimulate business. And the pool league, she said, can help the taverns in this regard and, at the same time, solidify the operator-owned tables in the location because to participate in the pool league the tables must be owned by an operator.

"We see this as a way for operators to acquire locations and contracts," she told *Play Meter*.

"If the operator is not involved in the promotion end of the pool table business," said Milhem, "if he won't put in an effort to develop the league program, the location is going to eventually question the purpose of the operator."

Dynamo's Struh's echoed that sentiment. "The operator is hurting himself," he said. "When he becomes lackadaisical, his locations pick up on that. Individual operators have to get involved in promotions—whether they be leagues or tournaments. And that's not something that Dynamo or Valley can do for them. By being aggressive in this area, operators can reverse the trend of location-owned tables."

But, despite Valley's persistent efforts in the area of promoting the pool league concept, it appears operators may be becoming aware of the benefits of league play by another avenue—electronic darts.

The recent boom in sales of elec-



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tronic darts has brought about an increase awareness in league play because, according to operators and dart manufacturers alike, electronic darts cannot survive on location without a continuing promotion like league play—unlike a pool table which can survive commercially on location with or without promotions.

"A pool table will do 70 percent of its potential without promotions," said Struhs. "So right now, for many operators, putting that extra energy into a pool league won't generate as much for the operator as putting that energy into starting up a dart league."

But operators who have been introduced to league play through the darts are now considering pool leagues as well, and that should help companies like Valley and Dynamo which insist that supporting operator-run promotions is the way to increase pool table sales.

J.L. Reagan of B&S Music in Rome, Georgia, who runs a successful dart league program, said the success of the dart league has given them thoughts about operator promotions with the pool table. Said Reagan, "We've been contemplating a pool league simply because of the increase we've experienced running dart leagues."

And Milhem, acknowledging that dart leagues have added greater visibility to this type of promotion for pool tables, said dart leagues would not pre-empt an operator from running pool leagues and could very well spur additional operators to run pool leagues.

"We've found darts and pool complement each other nicely," he said. "Strong dart leagues foster strong pool leagues. There's a synergism with pool and darts. They attract two different groups of players."

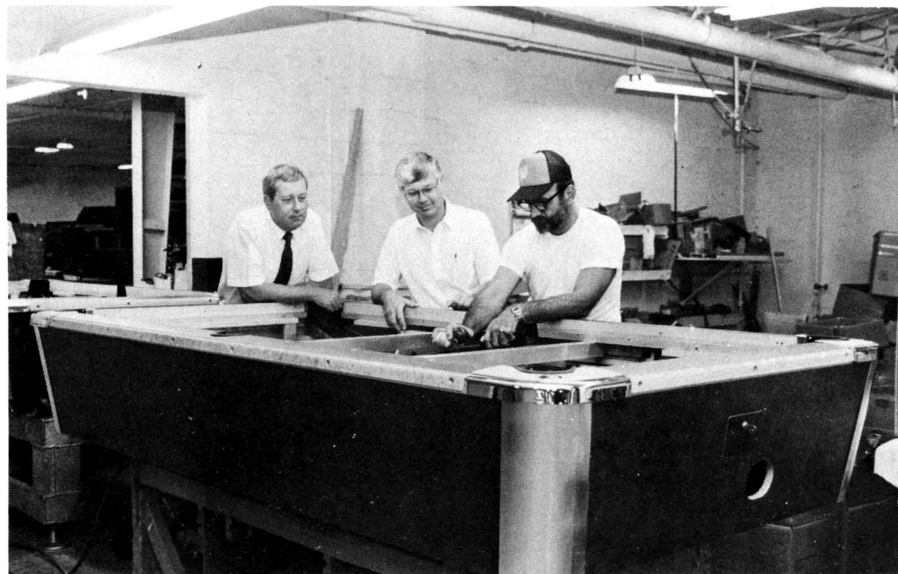
Marcio Bonilla of Arachnid, the leading electronic dart manufacturer, agreed that dart leagues did not by nature exclude pool leagues or vice versa since the two appeal to different classes of players.

And Mike Kelly of Northgate Amusement, an operating company in Springfield, Illinois, said, "I don't see too many dart players shooting pool. It's two different kinds of players."

Don Waldron, also of Northgate Amusements, explained the reason his company opted for dart leagues instead of pool leagues initially. Said Waldron, "We've always been interested in pool leagues. But, for every pool table, you can put out ten darts,



*D&R Star pool league finals in Rochester, Minnesota—
an example of how an operator can run a successful pool league.*



*Alan Schafer and Dick Shelton look on as Jerry Heckmeyer inspects
Valley's exclusive cue ball separation system.*



Valley's slate storage and wrapping room.

and that makes it ten times easier to start dart leagues since we have a lot of bars without pool tables.

"Our only reason for not getting involved in pool leagues at this time," he continued, "is simply that we don't have the concentration of pool tables we would need to run a successful league."

Valley's insistence on the pool league is not shared by all table manufacturers, however. Struhs said Dynamo prefers to promote pool tournaments, rather than pool leagues, because leagues "demand maximum commitment on the part of the operator."

He continued, "Leagues are the Utopian situation, but tournaments are the next best program for operators."

"A tournament," he continued, "can be a very effective and efficient and inexpensive operator promotion. And we estimate it can add a 15-25 percent increase in pool table revenue."

Struhs also touched on the locations' need for operator promotions because "right now, locations are hungry," he said. "They're losing traffic."

Struhs continued, "Promotion is actually very cost effective. You actually put in more in terms of energy than you do in terms of money."

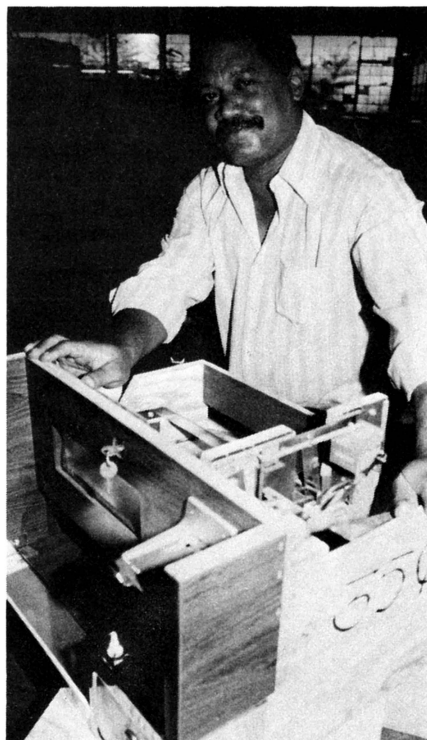
Both Struhs and Milhem cited the west coast as the worst area for pool tables because location-owned tables is the rule rather than the exception there.

Milhem said that there is organized operator-run promotions in every area of the country except the west coast, and it's that lack of operator initiative on the west coast which has contributed to the poor pool table market there.

But with the stiffer D.U.I. laws now in effect and locations suffering from a lack of traffic, now is probably the best chance operators in that area have to

reverse the trend of location-owned tables by delivering customers to a location with pool leagues on operator-owned tables.

While Valley and Dynamo are focusing their efforts on attacking the bigger market picture and how opera-



U.B.I. is boasting of new design improvements in its table, like the mechanized works-in-a-drawer.

tors can win additional locations, a third pool table manufacturer has taken an entirely different approach.

Morris of U.B.I. said league play is a nice benefit to the operator because it secures locations for the operator and increases the table's take, but his efforts are strictly geared to taking away market share from Valley and Dynamo by improving his table.

"We're in a different situation from our competitors," he told *Play Meter*. "In 1978, we came out with the *Bronco*,

which was probably the worst pool table ever produced, and we lost a lot of our following as a result of that."

But now, Morris said, the company has redesigned its table and is offering to buy back its new tables if they don't make more money than the competition's tables. "We'll even go to the location and pick up the table ourselves," Morris said. "And, so far, we haven't had to pick up a single table yet."

Morris continued, "You can't cheapen your product. That's why our biggest efforts are in the area of quality and promotion."

So, while all three manufacturers concede the pool table market is presently a replacement market, the three manufacturers disagree on nearly every other point.

Valley and U.B.I. see the pool table market growing. Dynamo sees the market shrinking.

Valley and Dynamo both see operator-run promotions as the key to greater sales for their companies. And U.B.I. sees greater sales coming only through making a better table than it has in the past.

And, while Valley contends that operators should run pool leagues, Dynamo says that pool tournaments are the more likely course.

And while both Dynamo and U.B.I. contend they are taking market share away from Valley, Valley contends that its business is as strong as ever and has even shown signs of greater activity.

What does it mean? Perhaps that the long-awaited operator trend of back-to-basics is finally beginning to materialize, that operators are finally beginning to reinvest in industry staples like pool tables.

Is the back-to-basics a real trend or merely an empty phrase that has no bearing in reality? The next 12 months should decide that. All in all, it appears to be an interesting sales year for all three pool table companies. •

Mali

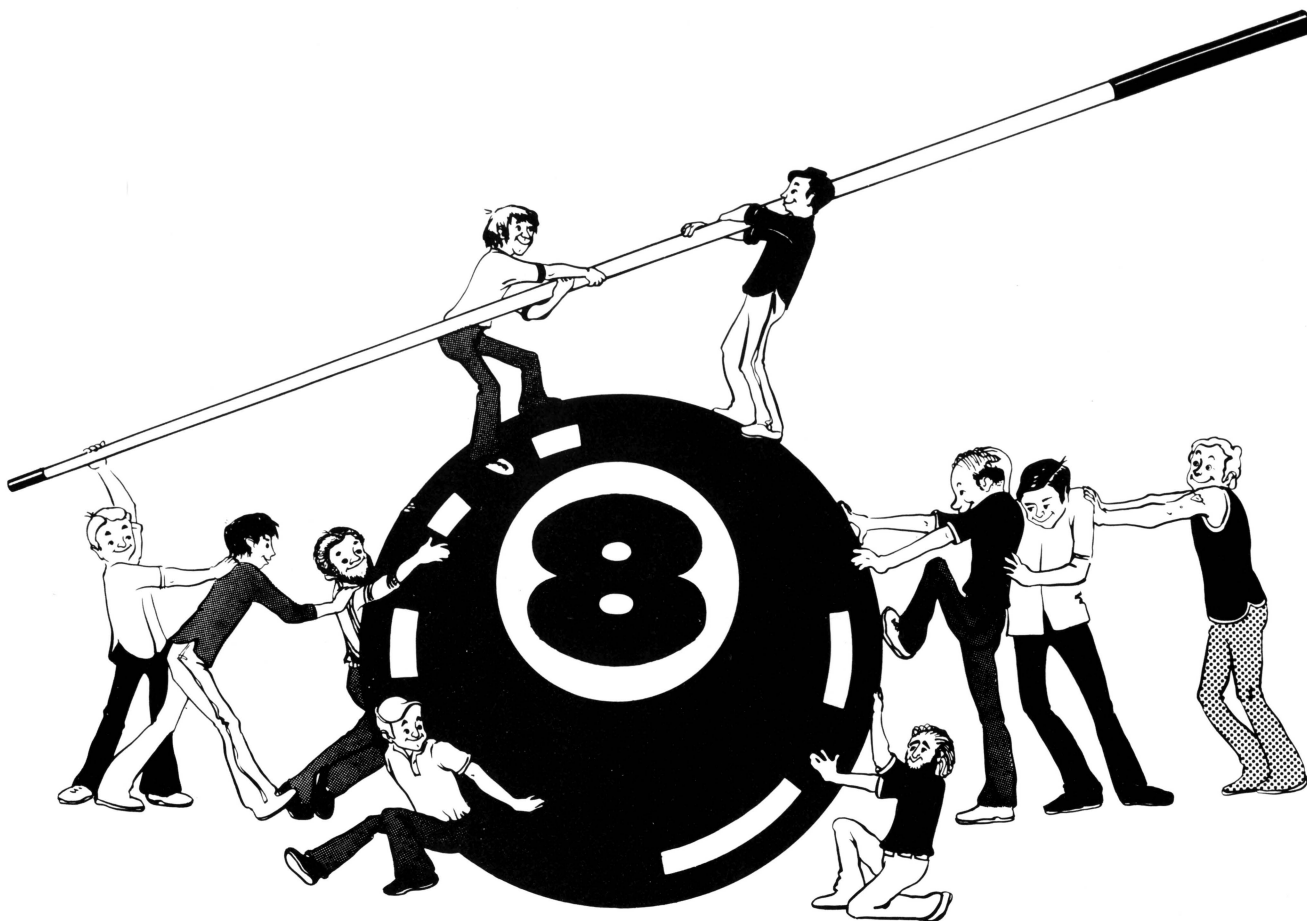
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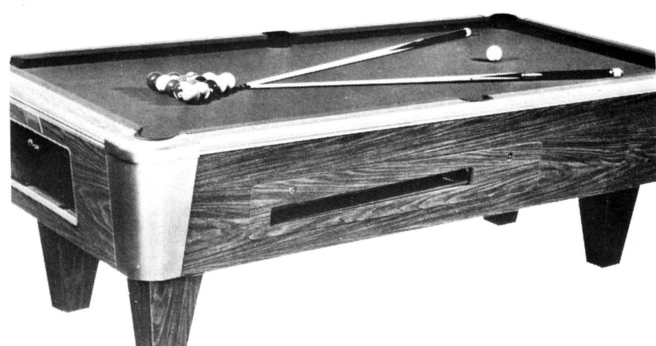
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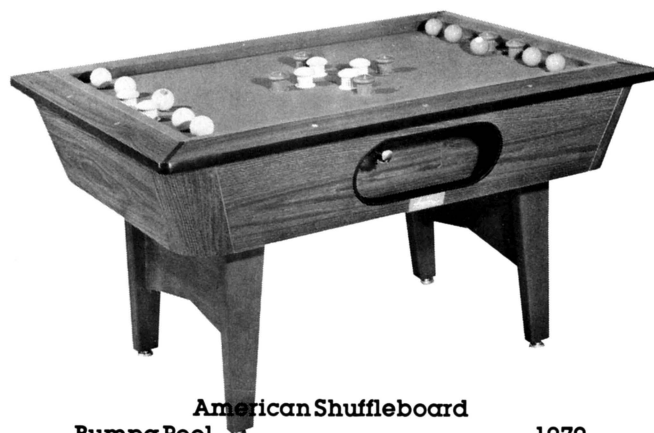
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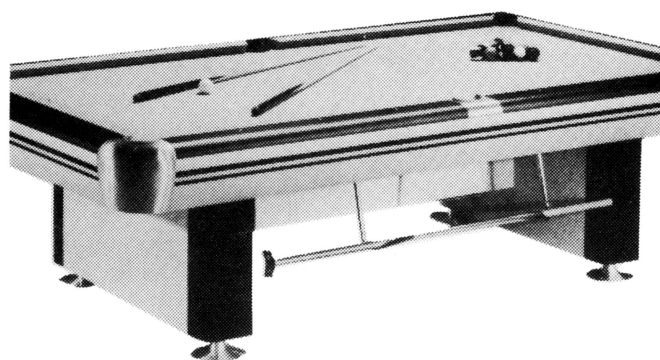
American Shuffleboard
American Classic II 1980



American Shuffleboard
Bumpa Pool 1979



Brunswick
The Gold Crown 2000 1982



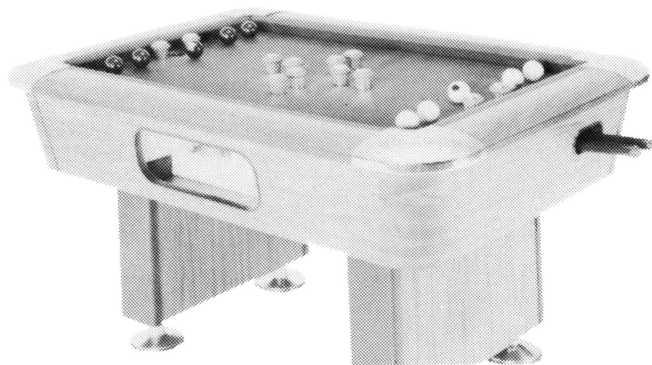
Dufferin
The Challenger 1980



Big D
Dynamo 1981



Big D
Dynamo 1983



Eight Ball National Billiard Mfg. Co.
Paramount Bumper Pool Table 1982



Coronet International Billiard 1972-1980



Silver Shadow Irving Kaye 1978



Lion's Head Irving Kaye 1979



Montana Billiards Supply & Mfg.
The Boss 1983



Probe International
Lynx—Silhouette 2000 1983



Bronco U.B.I. 1980



Series 500 U.B.I. 1982



Series 1000

U.B.I.

1982



Quantum

U.S. Billiards

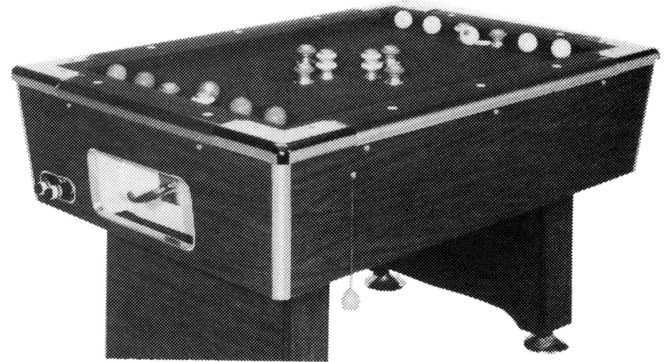
1983



Pro Series

U.S. Billiards

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U.S. Billiards
Club Rebound Table



Cougar

Valley

1979



Tiger Cat

Valley

1982



Cougar Cheyenne

Valley

1982



Lynx

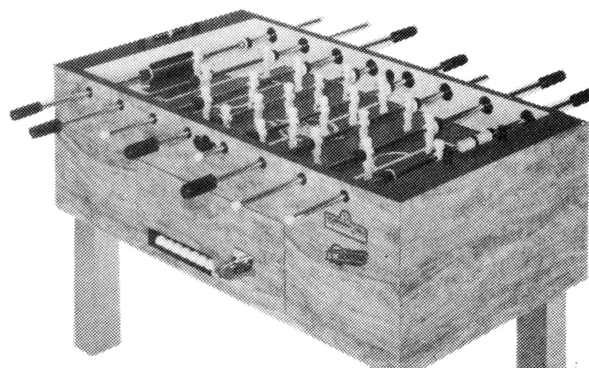
Valley

1984

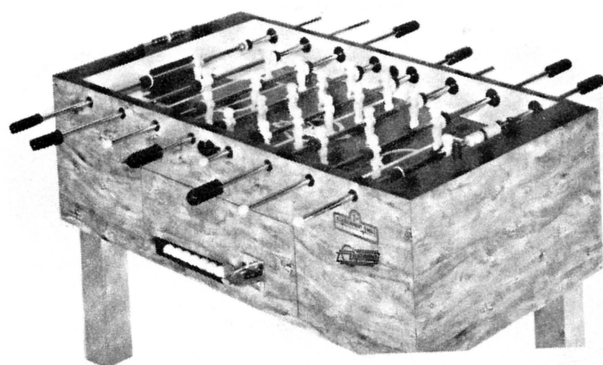
OTHER TABLE GAMES



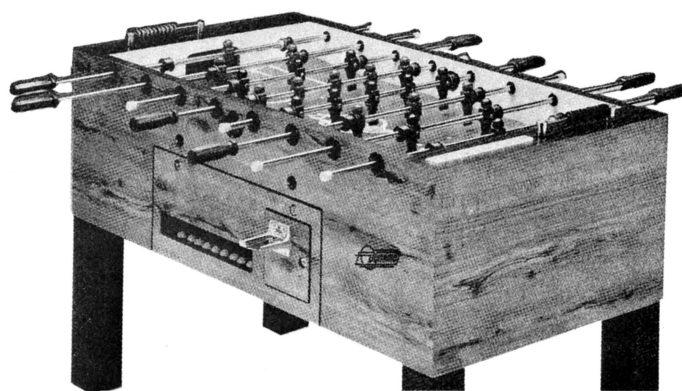
Air-Table-Hockey
Air-Table Hockey 1982



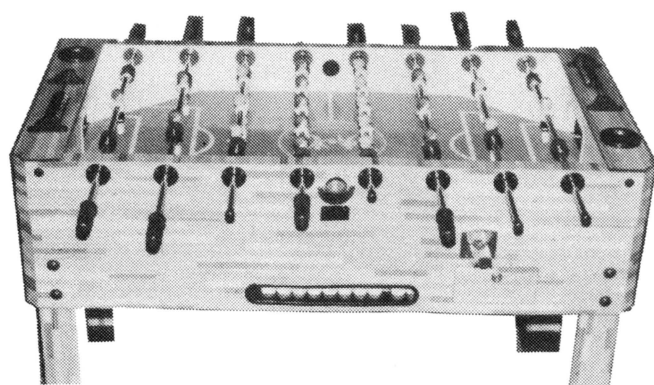
Pro-Bilt
Dynamo 1982



Dynamo
Dynamo Soccer 1983



Dynamo
DS-3 Soccer Table 1984



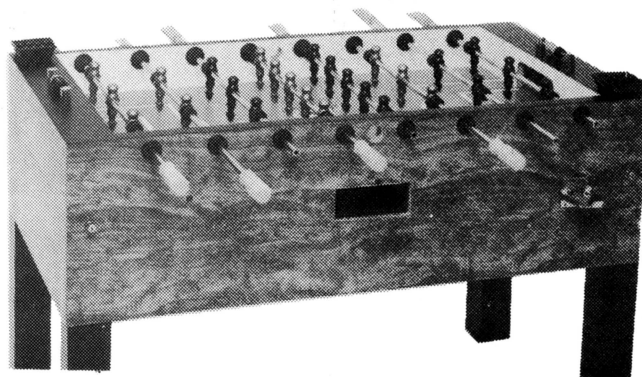
Imperial Billiards
Premier Soccer

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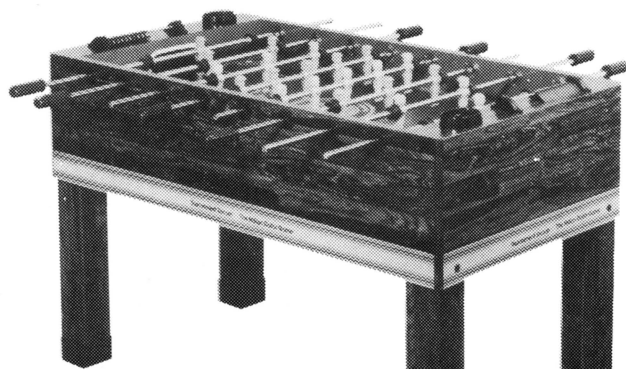
Silver Cloud
K Enterprises

1983



Survivor
Tornado Table Soccer

1982



Penn Ray Sutra
Tournament Soccer



SST8
U.S. Billiards

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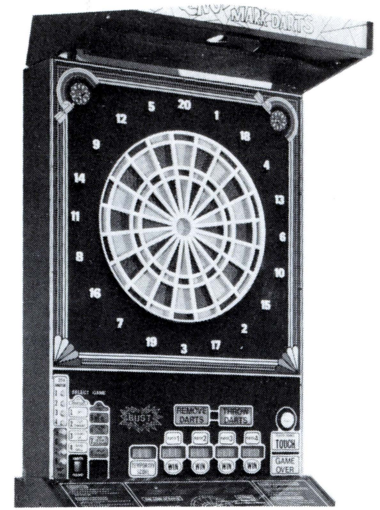
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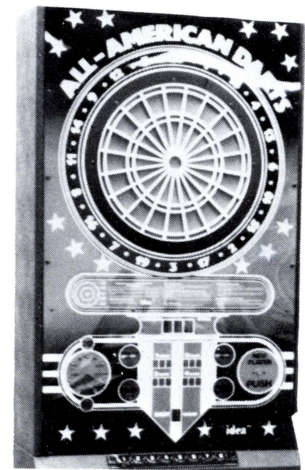
Arachnid
English Mark Darts '75-'84



IDEA
Century Darts May '83



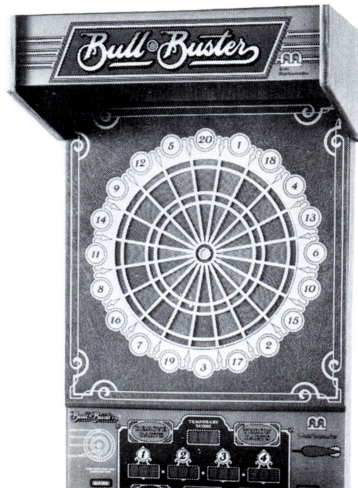
IDEA
Royal Darts Jan. '84



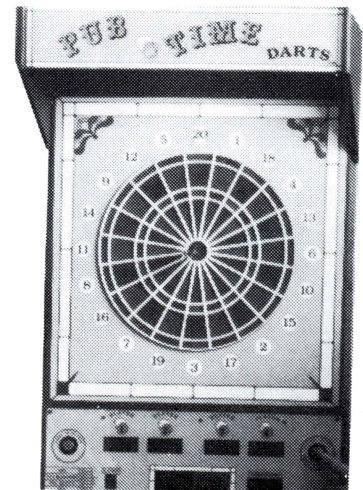
IDEA
All-American Darts Feb. '84



IDEA
All-American Sergeant 1985



Merit
Bull Buster Darts 1985



Nomac
Pub Time Darts 1984

SHUFFLE ALLEYS AND BOWLERS



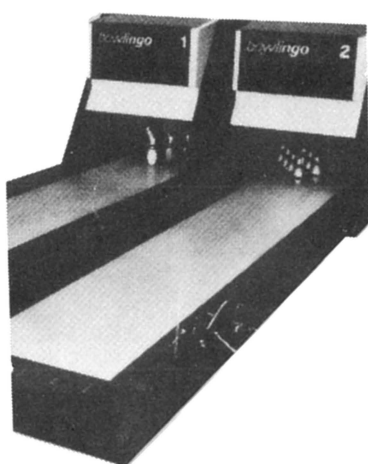
Royal
Am. Shuffleboard '75-'82



10 Pin Deluxe
Bally Midway 1984



Strikes & Spares
Bally Midway 1985



Bowlingo
Dufferin 1982



Whirly Bucket
Exidy 1982

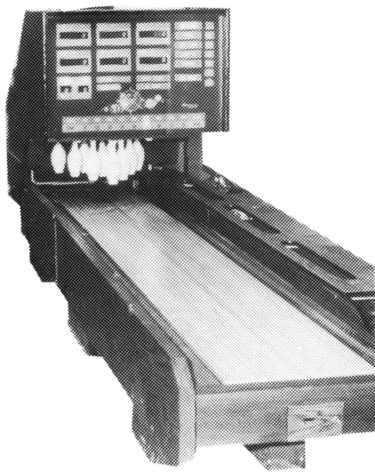


Tidal Wave
Exidy 1983

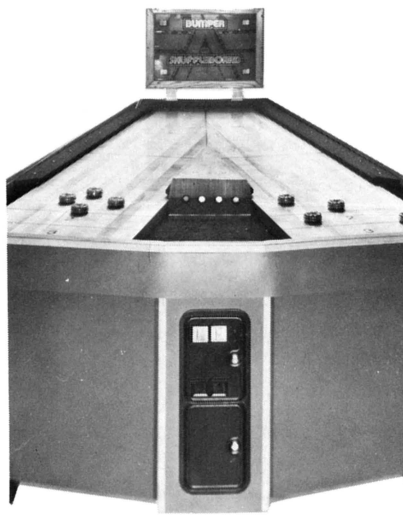
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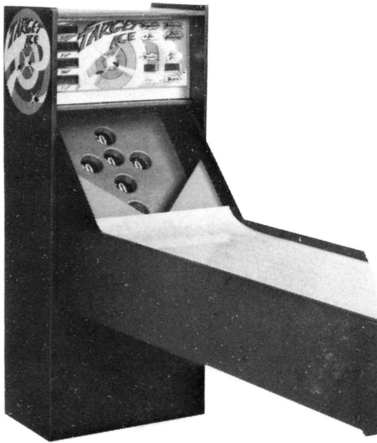
Bowl
G Manufacturing 1983



Bumper Shuffleboard
Game Technology 1984



Boom Ball
Meltec '78-'84



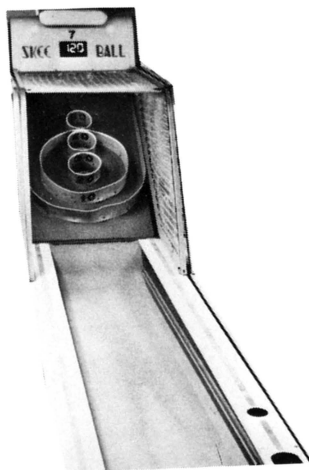
Target Ace
Meltec 1985



Ten Pins
Norton 1983



High Ball
Norton 1983



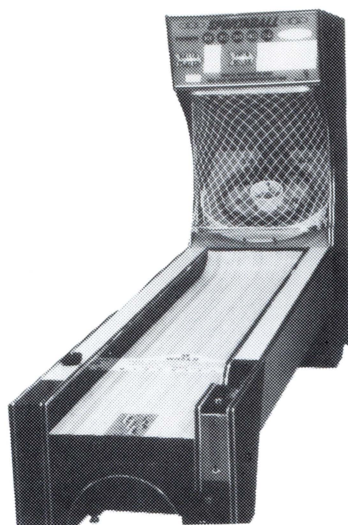
Skee-Ball
Skee-Ball 1984



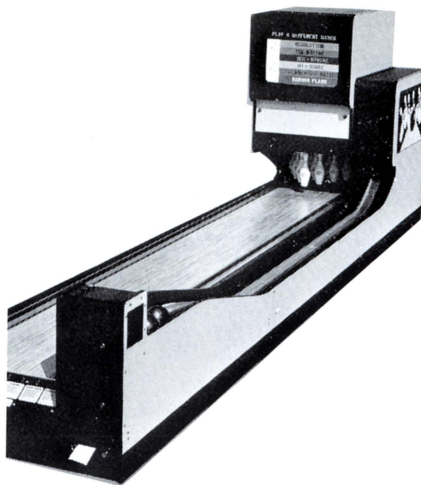
Mini Skee-Ball
Skee-Ball 1983



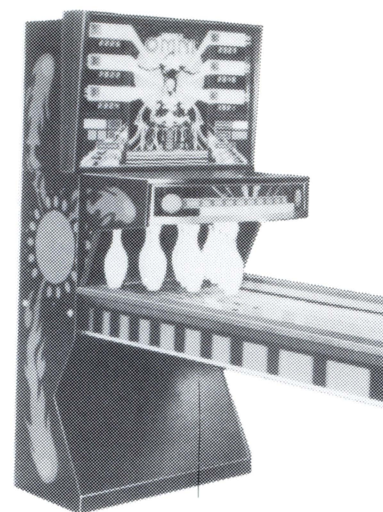
Superball
Superball 1983



U.B.I. Sportaball 1980



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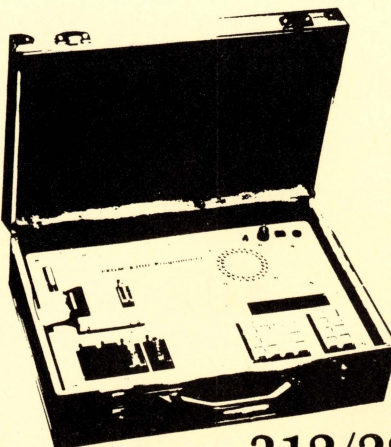
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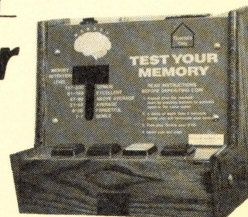
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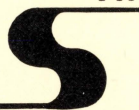
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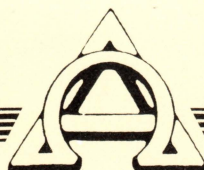
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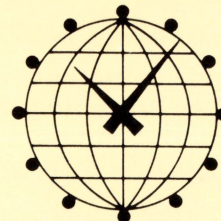
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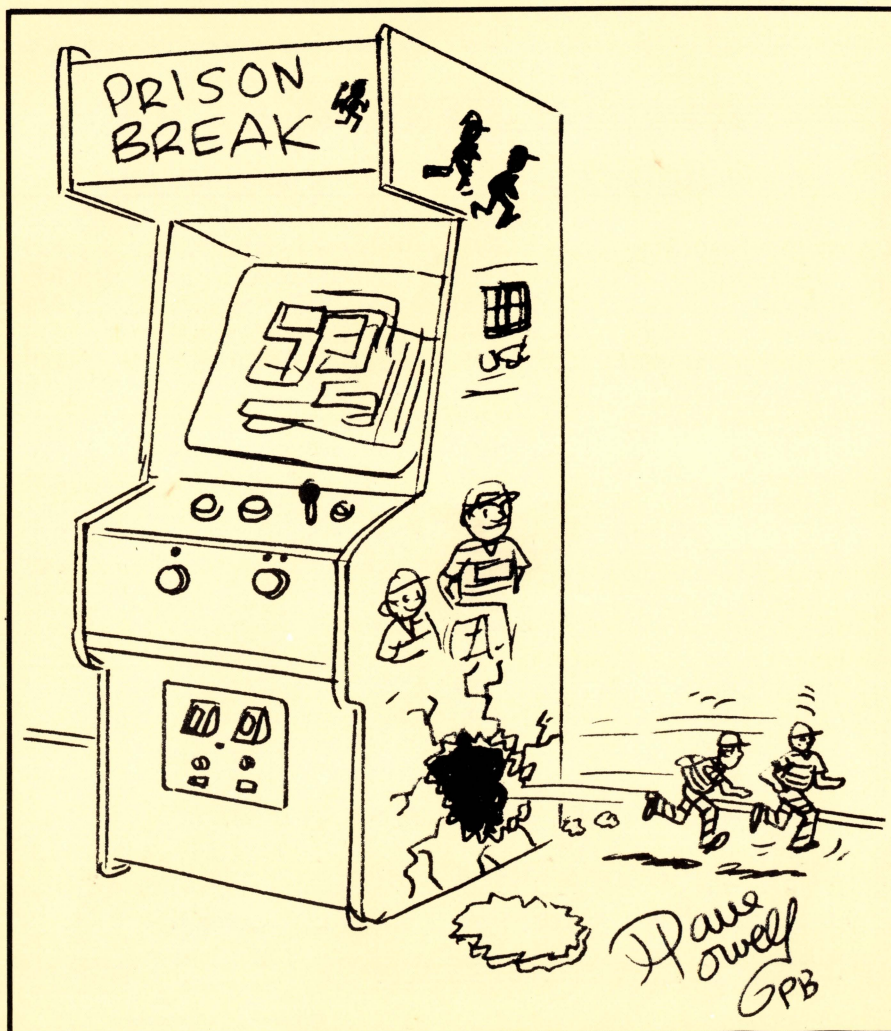
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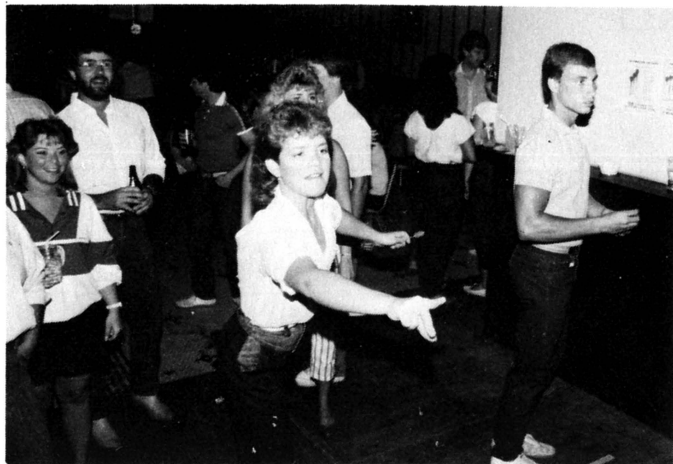
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newer players who are just beginning and doesn't discourage novices who know they just can't beat certain teams because they have top-flight shooters.

Waldron, seeing the player demand for solidly structured competition like a dart league, said he's now considering running double shifts—in other words, having one league play at an earlier hour and another league play at a later hour. The reason? He's run out of days of the week. He's already running leagues six nights a week!

"Anything is possible," he said, "with good organization, good product, and good promotion."

Celenza talked about the frenzy that accompanies electronic dart leagues in his area. He said that large numbers of people at some of the bars would travel with their team from bar to bar to cheer them on.

McKennon summed up the trend toward operator-run leagues. Said he, "The operator has always been his own worst enemy. With the technological revolution of ten years ago," he

said, "the operator finally gave way to hiring someone who had the technical expertise. Now, ten years later, he wonders why he had any resistance to it in the first place."

"Operators who understand this today are people who are hiring promotional help because, ten years from now, they are going to look back on this period and wonder again why they were so hesitant to do this."

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Dart league play generates a frenzy.

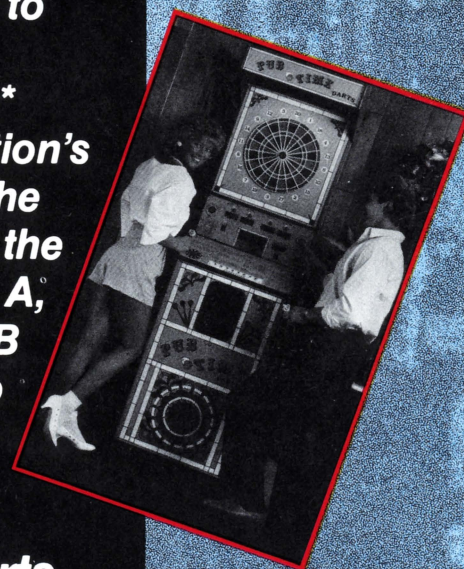
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